

EPA News Highlights 7/14/2017

Denver Post: Give EPA's new rule for clean water a chance

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Reuters: U.S. court gives environmental regulator 14-day extension on methane rule

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia granted the EPA's request for extra time to examine its next steps in court before being required to enforce the law, which says oil and gas companies must check for and fix methane leaks in their equipment. The 14-day period is far shorter than the minimum of 52 days the agency requested in a July 7 court filing.

E&E News: EPA press shop adds former GOP campaign aides

U.S. EPA's public affairs office has brought on two aides well-versed in Republican politics. Michael Abboud and James Hewitt have both recently joined the agency's press shop. "Michael and James are extremely valuable additions to our press team," Liz Bowman, an EPA spokeswoman, told E&E News. "We are glad they chose to help us communicate the Administrator's actions to implement President Trump's goal of providing real environmental results to the American people."

BNA: Noranda Mining Wins Stay of Asarco Superfund Case

A federal court in Utah called a time-out July 11 in long-running Superfund litigation between Asarco LLC and Noranda Mining Inc. over waste from a Utah mine (Asarco, LLC v. Noranda Mining, Inc., 2017 BL 238412, D. Utah, No.12-cv-00527, 7/11/17). The ruling granted Noranda's request for a stay of the case until the EPA decides on a cleanup plan for a large section of the hazardous waste site known as Lower Silver Creek.

BNA: Massachusetts Cities Get Stormwater Permit Relief for a Year

More than 200 small cities and towns, as well as home builders in Massachusetts, will get a year's relief from complying with a federal stormwater permit, while federal courts resolve the three separate challenges filed against it. The EPA postponed the effective compliance date of the Clean Water Act permit for stormwater runoff until July 1, 2018, according to a July 13 notice. According to the EPA, polluted stormwater runoff is often discharged untreated into local waters.

The Denver Post

<http://www.denverpost.com/2017/07/14/give-epas-new-rule-for-clean-water-a-chance/>

Give EPA's new rule for clean water a chance

By Douglas Kemper 7/14/17, 2:05PM

The Denver Post article on July 10 discussing the Trump Administration proposal to reform the 2015 Clean Water Rule — "Waters of the U.S." — gave a misleading picture.

Environmentalists asserted in the article that 70 percent of our waterways would be unprotected and the new rule aims to "drain our wetlands and pollute our streams." These statements are simply untrue. The fact is a new rule has yet to be drafted. Fueling passions with inaccurate statements is unlikely to lead to productive discussions.

Prior to the November election, the Sixth District Court of Appeals stayed implementation of the Clean Water Rule. The practical result is the historic regulation scheme has not changed. Negotiations to develop a new Clean Water Rule are about to begin. Predictions that a future proposal will weaken protections for drinking water or the environment have no factual basis. Such an outcome is unacceptable to Colorado's water community.

The Administration said it will formally reinstate the historic legal status. The earliest a new proposal would be available for comment is late 2017.

Before proceeding, it is important to understand that standards protecting the quality of streams and drinking water are not under consideration. Such protections are provided by other federal and state laws and regulations.

So what's the fuss? The story begins with the 1972 Clean Water Act. Iconic examples such as the Cuyahoga River in Ohio catching fire in 1969 helped push passage of the 1972 act. The goal was to have the nation's waters "fishable" and "swimmable" by providing a comprehensive framework to regulate dumping (discharging) pollutants into waters.

But which waters? Large interconnected rivers and lakes are obvious. What about waterways that flow only seasonally known as ephemeral streams? Isolated ponds on the plains known as prairie potholes? Areas that are quite damp, but with relatively little standing water known as wetlands?

Questions like these have plagued the water community for decades — especially in the West. The 1972 act identified "navigable waters" as the target but did not provide a very helpful definition.

When the law, in this case the 1972 act, does not have enough specifics for regulators, rules are needed to guide enforcement actions. That's why EPA wrote the Clean Water Rule: to provide clarity as to what waters are being regulated. This is easier said than done.

So, people look to the courts for an answer. In *Rapanos v. United States*, late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia authored the now infamous plurality opinion that Waters of the United States should include only relatively permanent, standing or continuously flowing bodies of water.

Does this include seasonal rivers and wetlands? There is no clear answer yet and this may be at the heart of the matter in drafting a new rule. As Justice Scalia commented, navigable waters cannot refer to storm sewers, culverts, dry arroyos, man-made ditches, or ordinarily dry lands.

In April, the administration requested informal input on two points. First, whether "seasonal flow" or "other implementable metrics" should be benchmarks to define relatively permanent waters, covered under the 1972 act. Second, whether "some degree of connectivity," also using implementable metrics, should be the test applied in addressing wetlands.

Maintaining clean water is essential for our businesses and recreational economy, as well as our drinking water, irrigated agriculture, and the health of riparian zones. The EPA addressed many of our concerns in the final version of the Obama era Clean Water Rule.

Nevertheless, some concerns remain. These include protecting existing agricultural water uses and rural communities, exemptions for man-made water treatment and storm water control facilities, and

protecting ground water — historically a state prerogative.

We hope discussions for a new rule will move forward in a cooperative spirit. Constructive negotiations will be increasingly difficult if the public believes a new rule would pollute our environment and contaminate our drinking water. The new rule has yet to be drafted. Let's give things a chance to succeed.

Douglas Kemper is executive director of Colorado Water Congress.

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-environment-methane-idUSKBN19Y2X4>

U.S. court gives environmental regulator 14-day extension on methane rule

By: Emily Flitter, 7/13/17, 6: 16 p.m.

A U.S. court on Thursday gave the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 14 extra days to comply with a July 3 order requiring the EPA to enforce rules on methane leaks in oil and gas equipment, which the agency had sought to freeze, a filing showed.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia granted the EPA's request for extra time to examine its next steps in court before being required to enforce the law, which says oil and gas companies must check for and fix methane leaks in their equipment. The 14-day period is far shorter than the minimum of 52 days the agency requested in a July 7 court filing.

"To stay issuance of the mandate for longer would hand the agency, in all practical effect, the very delay in implementation this panel determined to be 'arbitrary, capricious and in excess of EPA's statutory authority'," the court ruled.

An EPA spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The agency on June 5 announced a halt to the rule after EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt wrote in an April 18 letter that the agency intended to reconsider imposing it. But environmental groups sued the EPA, arguing that the agency did not have the authority to halt the rule during those deliberations, and the appeals court agreed.

"The court reaffirmed the importance of ensuring that its decision vacating Administrator Pruitt's unlawful suspension of these clean-air protections limiting oil and gas pollution swiftly take effect," said Peter Zalzal, a lawyer for the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the groups suing the agency, in a news release issued after the ruling.

The case is Clean Air Council v. Scott Pruitt, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit, 17-1145.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/07/14/stories/1060057386>

EPA Press shop adds former GOP campaign aides

By Kevin Bogardus, 7/14/17, 1:00 PM

U.S. EPA's public affairs office has brought on two aides well-versed in Republican politics.

Michael Abboud and James Hewitt have both recently joined the agency's press shop.

"Michael and James are extremely valuable additions to our press team," Liz Bowman, an EPA spokeswoman, told E&E News. "We are glad they chose to help us communicate the Administrator's actions to implement President Trump's goal of providing real environmental results to the American people."

Abboud, a special assistant in EPA's public affairs office, and Hewitt, a special adviser there, have both worked at the Republican National Committee.

Hewitt was at the RNC for nearly two years, including as a deputy press secretary, according to his LinkedIn profile. He comes to EPA from Dezenhall Resources Ltd., a strategic communications firm, where he worked since April 2016.

Hewitt graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder, with a bachelor's degree in history.

Abboud also worked at the RNC for nearly two years as a research analyst. He had a stint as an aide on President Trump's 2016 campaign and comes to EPA from America Rising LLC, a Republican political opposition research firm.

Abboud earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Creighton University, according to his LinkedIn profile.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/1245/split_display.adp?fedfid=116563901&vname=denotallissues&fn=116563901&jd=116563901

Noranda Mining Wins Stay of Asarco Superfund Case

By: Steven M. Sellers, 7/14/17

A federal court in Utah called a time-out July 11 in long-running Superfund litigation between Asarco LLC and Noranda Mining Inc. over waste from a Utah mine (Asarco, LLC v. Noranda Mining, Inc., 2017 BL 238412, D. Utah, No.12-cv-00527, 7/11/17).

The ruling granted Noranda's request for a stay of the case until the EPA decides on a cleanup plan for a large section of the hazardous waste site known as Lower Silver Creek.

Asarco wanted to press ahead with calculations of Noranda's contribution liability for the site near Park City, Utah. But that would mean "experts for both sides would have to guess at what plan the EPA might adopt in the future, what it would cost, and then allocate the potential liability under the speculative plan," the court said.

The EPA's cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act is funded in part by an \$8.7 million settlement it reached with Asarco, a former owner of the property, in Asarco's Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings.

The so-called Superfund law governs the remediation of, and liability for, hazardous waste disposals.

But the Asarco settlement was for a portion of the site known as Richardson Flats—which has been subject to an EPA remediation plan since 2005—and not for Lower Silver Creek, which has been under investigation by the EPA since 2009.

Asarco isn't entitled to Superfund contribution from other parties until it proves it has paid more than its fair share for the entire cleanup, the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah said.

Here, the costs could run from \$22.5 million for a partial excavation to \$57 million for a “dig and haul” of all affected soils, the court said.

U.S. District Judge David Nuffer wrote the opinion.

The law offices of McGuireWoods, as well as Parr Brown Gee & Loveless and Holland & Hart represented Asarco.

Parsons Behle & Latimer, as well as Hayne & Boone represented Noranda.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/1245/split_display.adp?fedfid=116563886&vname=denotallissues&fn=116563886&jd=116563886

Massachusetts Cities Get Stormwater Permit Relief for a Year

By: Amena H. Saiyid, 7/14/17

More than 200 small cities and towns, as well as home builders in Massachusetts, will get a year's relief from complying with a federal stormwater permit, while federal courts resolve the three separate challenges filed against it.

The EPA postponed the effective compliance date of the Clean Water Act permit for stormwater runoff until July 1, 2018, according to a July 13 notice. According to the EPA, polluted stormwater runoff is often discharged untreated into local waters.

The agency's action responds to three of the petitioners—Massachusetts Coalition for Water Stewardship, city of Lowell, and town of Franklin—that sought a stay in the permit's compliance debate in the interest of judicial review.

The stormwater permit the EPA issued in April 2016 under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program established notice-of-intent requirements for the small municipal systems. It includes prohibitions and more stringent management practices for stormwater discharges. This permit would have replaced the 2012 permit that would have expired June 30, but now is administratively continued for another year.

Aligned Permits

The Massachusetts permit is now being litigated in the D.C. Circuit, but its fate is tied to separate challenges that the home builders, the Center for Regulatory Reasonableness—a coalition of municipal, industrial entities—and the nonprofit Conservation Law Foundation have filed against an identical

permit that EPA issued for New Hampshire in January. The New Hampshire permit is supposed to take effect July 1, 2018, which is the same date to which the Massachusetts permit has been postponed.

Among the many reasons EPA cited for the postponement is that the dates for both permits will be aligned.

The goal of all parties to the litigation is to have one consolidated case, as the issues are the same, Jeffrey Longworth, a Barnes & Thornburg attorney who is representing the National Association of Home Builders and the Home Builders Association of Massachusetts Inc., told Bloomberg BNA July 13.

EPA Evening News Highlights 7.31.17

The Hill: EPA head disputes charge he spends too much time at home in Oklahoma

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is disputing accusations that he spends too much time in Oklahoma and charges taxpayers for his travel there. Scott Pruitt, who has lived in Oklahoma for much of his life and was most recently its attorney general, said groups making those accusations are wrong. He blamed former Obama administration employees driven by their opposition to him for the claims. Pruitt defended himself Thursday while in Oklahoma to speak with agricultural interests about his efforts to roll back former President Barack Obama's Clean Water Rule.

Associated Press: Harcros Chemical Penalized for Clean Air Act Violations

A Kansas-based chemical company has agreed to pay a \$950,000 penalty to the federal government for allegations that it violated the Clean Air Act. The settlement announced Monday by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency also requires Harcros Chemicals of Kansas City, Kansas, to make sure that its accident prevention program complies with federal requirements. Harcros operates 31 facilities in 19 states that manufacture, blend, repackage and distribute chemicals. The settlement calls for the company to audit 28 of its facilities to identify and correct potential sources of Clean Air Act violations, and to effectively react to accidents when they occur. It also requires installation of foam-based sprinkler systems at eight Harcros facilities.

Newsmax: EPA Adds Hazardous Waste Sites to Priority List

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Monday it is adding seven hazardous waste sites and proposing four new ones across the country to its list of national priorities, making them eligible to receive federal funding for cleanup. The EPA has identified the Superfund program as one of its top priorities, the centerpiece of what it calls a "Back to Basics" approach to environmental protection, focusing more on cleaning up pollution and less on battling climate change.

Breitbart: EPA Admin Scott Pruitt's Hometown Paper: Left-Wing 'Fishing Expedition' on Trips Back to Oklahoma

Pruitt's hometown newspaper, the Tulsa World, published an editorial on Sunday over the flap about Pruitt's travels, praising the native son as in touch with real Americans and accusing environmental activists of conducting a "fishing expedition." The editorial, entitled "Tulsa World editorial: Heaven forfend! Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends! A not-so-stunning revelation about the EPA chief's use of taxpayer funds."

NTK Network: Pruitt's Hometown Editorial Board Blasts His Critics

The editorial board of Tulsa World, the hometown paper of EPA chief Scott Pruitt, took time to defend its native son against attacks that he returns to Oklahoma too often. Democrats concealing themselves as the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) filed Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain Pruitt's travel schedule. Upon discovering that the EPA director returns to his home state some weekends, EIP ran to the press with their findings.

Hot Air: Another EPA Staffer "Quits" Because Of Trump (But Is Actually Retiring)

Remember when Mike Cox, a climate change adviser at the EPA, "quit" his job because of his disagreements with the Trump administration and sent in a "scathing letter of resignation?" As it turned out, Cox was actually retiring and had been eligible for retirement for some time. Well, that pattern is continuing this week. Elizabeth Southerland, the director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, unceremoniously quit today. Her claimed reasons included problems with the

President's proposed budget and how much was being allocated to the EPA. This is a rather frivolous reason because, as has been well documented in the past, whatever budget the President initially submits is little more than a wish list which rarely carries any weight.

Daily Caller: Trump's EPA Is The First In Three Decades To Prioritize Cutting Regulations

Scott Pruitt is the first head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to prioritize economic growth over environmental protections since Anne Gorsuch Burford ran the EPA for former President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1983, according to Axios. Unlike most EPA administrators, Pruitt sports a conservative view of the agency and the direction its policy should take. Usually, EPA heads are left-of-center and environmentally driven rather than economically, even under Republican presidents, Axios reported Monday.

Marketplace (NPR program): EPA turns to environmental cleanup, away from climate change

Tomorrow, the Senate subcommittee that oversees the EPA's Superfund program is scheduled to hold a hearing on the program's work. That's the initiative, begun in 1980, that cleans up sites contaminated with hazardous materials. Under EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, the agency is refocusing its attention toward environmental cleanups. But that doesn't necessarily mean many more cleanups will get done.

New York Times: Trump Removes Anthony Scaramucci From Communications Director Role

President Trump has decided to remove Anthony Scaramucci from his position as communications director, three people close to the decision said Monday, relieving him just days after Mr. Scaramucci unloaded a crude verbal tirade against other senior members of the president's senior staff. Mr. Scaramucci's abrupt removal came just 10 days after the wealthy New York financier was brought on to the West Wing staff, a move that convulsed an already chaotic White House and led to the departures of Sean Spicer, the former press secretary, and Reince Priebus, the president's first chief of staff.

CNBC: Treasury sanctions Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro

The Treasury Department slapped sanctions on Nicolas Maduro on Monday, alleging that Venezuela's president has attempted to undermine democracy and the rule of law in his country. On Sunday, Venezuela held a controversial election to create the National Constituent Assembly (ANC), a constitutional assembly that would grant Maduro's party sweeping power. But many countries said they would not recognize that vote. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said those who participate in the illegitimate assembly could face "future U.S. sanctions for their role in undermining democratic processes and institutions in Venezuela."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344295-epa-head-disputes-charge-that-he-spends-too-much-time-in-oklahoma>

EPA head disputes charge he spends too much time at home in Oklahoma

By Timothy Cama, 7/31/17

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is disputing accusations that he spends too much time in Oklahoma and charges taxpayers for his travel there.

Scott Pruitt, who has lived in Oklahoma for much of his life and was most recently its attorney general, said groups making those accusations are wrong. He blamed former Obama administration employees driven by their opposition to him for the claims.

Pruitt defended himself Thursday while in Oklahoma to speak with agricultural interests about his efforts to roll back former President Barack Obama's Clean Water Rule.

"The folks talking about this, one, their facts are wrong, and that's not a surprise. But it's an alt-EPA," he told Oklahoma City television station Fox 25, referring to the social media identity of an anti-Trump group that claims to be EPA employees.

"It's a group of employees that worked for Obama, that formed an organization to put out these kinds of things that are not accurate and completely forthcoming as far as those issues," Pruitt continued.

In a Monday report based on agency documents, the Environmental Integrity Project said that through the end of May Pruitt has spent half of his tenure in Oklahoma.

The environmental group said the EPA paid at least \$12,000 for the airfare for those trips, since they often included at least some official responsibilities, after which Pruitt went home to Tulsa.

Pruitt was in Oklahoma for about 90 percent of the days that he traveled, the group said.

On Thursday, liberal watchdog group American Integrity asked the federal Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Pruitt's use of taxpayer funds for the trips was illegal. That group is led by former Obama administration employees.

EPA spokeswoman Amy Graham defended Pruitt, saying he properly gets reimbursed for official business and that he was working on all of the trips.

Graham also said that the original report about Pruitt's travel unfairly inflated the number of days he was in his home state.

"The inconvenient truth is that radical environmentalists are counting weekends, Mondays and Fridays spent in Washington, and holidays like Easter Sunday in their opposition research in an effort to distract from the administrator's significant accomplishments, including more than 30 regulatory actions, review of the Clean Power Plan, and rewriting the definition of a 'water of the U.S.'"

The Associated Press

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/kansas/articles/2017-07-31/harcros-chemical-penalized-for-clean-air-act-violations>

Harcros Chemical Penalized for Clean Air Act Violations

By AP Staff, 7/31/18

A Kansas-based chemical company has agreed to pay a \$950,000 penalty to the federal government for allegations that it violated the Clean Air Act.

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Harcros operates 31 facilities in 19 states that manufacture, blend, repack and distribute chemicals.

The settlement calls for the company to audit 28 of its facilities to identify and correct potential sources of Clean Air Act violations, and to effectively react to accidents when they occur. It also requires installation of foam-based sprinkler systems at eight Harcros facilities.

A phone message left with Harcros Chemicals was not immediately returned.

Newsmax

<http://www.newsmax.com/US/EPA-Hazardous-Waste-Sites/2017/07/31/id/804811/>

EPA Adds Hazardous Waste Sites to Priority List

By Newsmax, 7/31/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Monday it is adding seven hazardous waste sites and proposing four new ones across the country to its list of national priorities, making them eligible to receive federal funding for cleanup.

The EPA has identified the Superfund program as one of its top priorities, the centerpiece of what it calls a "Back to Basics" approach to environmental protection, focusing more on cleaning up pollution and less on battling climate change.

"My goal as administrator is to restore the Superfund program to its rightful place at the center of the agency's core mission," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said.

At least four of the 11 sites the agency added or proposed have been in operation within the last two decades and have been contaminated from a variety of sources, including manufacturing, wood treatment and aircraft maintenance.

The Superfund program has been criticized over the years for its slow efforts to clean up hazardous waste sites, which now number more than 1,300 around the country.

While Pruitt said he wants to prioritize the program, he would do so with a smaller budget. The Trump administration's budget proposal for fiscal 2018 included a 31 percent cut for the EPA, including a similar reduction of the agency's Hazardous Substance Superfund Account to \$762 million.

Last week, Pruitt accepted the recommendations of a task force he set up in May to help restructure the Superfund program.

Among the group's recommendations were for the administrator to focus on a "top-10" list of sites, directing resources to sites that have been on the national priority list for more than five years and inviting third parties to invest in priority cleanups.

Sites that have been cleaned up through the Superfund program can be reused.

Breitbart

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/07/30/pruitts-hometown-paper-left-wing-fishing-expedition-trips-back-oklahoma/>

EPA Admin Scott Pruitt's Hometown Paper: Left-Wing 'Fishing Expedition' on Trips Back to Oklahoma

By Penny Starr, 7/30/17

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt—former Senator and Attorney General from Oklahoma—was investigated by a left-wing environmental group for his trips back to his home state, some of which included the spending of taxpayer dollars. Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) sought information about Pruitt’s trip with a Freedom of Information Act request that revealed Pruitt had traveled to Oklahoma about 10 times, ABC News reported on Friday.

The trips estimated cost is \$15,000, according to ABC News.

The report also included news that EIP has now asked for the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to investigate the matter, which legal watchdog group American Oversight said could mean Pruitt violated federal rules by using government resources for personal or political purposes.

But Pruitt’s hometown newspaper, the Tulsa World, published an editorial on Sunday over the flap about Pruitt’s travels, praising the native son as in touch with real Americans and accusing environmental activists of conducting a “fishing expedition.”

The editorial, entitled “Tulsa World editorial: Heaven forfend! Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends! A not-so-stunning revelation about the EPA chief’s use of taxpayer funds,” said:

If we were supposed to [be] shocked to learn that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends, we’re not.

A fishing expedition request for Pruitt’s EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered just that, and that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates don’t approve of.

The New York Times first reported the results of a Freedom of Information request for Pruitt’s expense accounts filed by the Environmental Integrity Project, which has a history of blocking development and encouraging regulation. The findings: Pruitt returned to his Tulsa home at least 10 times in his first three months in office, costing taxpayers more than \$15,000.

During his trips home, Pruitt made some stops, including an informational meeting at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

As outrages go, it’s not worth much.

The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of “green” lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we’re being heard, too.

We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation’s bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans. If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists.

ABC also reported that Pruitt was in Oklahoma on Thursday to talk with the editorial board of the

Oklahoman newspaper and with ranchers who live and work on the Oklahoma Panhandle.

A local TV station reported that Pruitt said the criticism of his travel was an attack by his critics.

"The folks talking about this, one, their facts are wrong and that's not a surprise, but it's an alt-EPA," Pruitt said.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/pruitts-hometown-editorial-board-blasts-his-critics/>

Pruitt's Hometown Editorial Board Blasts His Critics

By NTK Staff, 7/31/17

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Democrats concealing themselves as the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) filed Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain Pruitt's travel schedule. Upon discovering that the EPA director returns to his home state some weekends, EIP ran to the press with their findings.

On Sunday, Tulsa World shot back.

The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of "green" lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too.

...

It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family.

The editorial board rightly noted of EPI's efforts, "As outrages go, it's not worth much."

Hot Air

Another EPA Staffer "Quits" Because Of Trump (But Is Actually Retiring)

<http://hotair.com/archives/2017/07/31/another-epa-staffer-quits-trump-actually-retiring/>

By Jazz Shaw, 7/31/17

Remember when Mike Cox, a climate change adviser at the EPA, "quit" his job because of his disagreements with the Trump administration and sent in a "scathing letter of resignation?" As it turned out, Cox was actually retiring and had been eligible for retirement for some time.

Well, that pattern is continuing this week. Elizabeth Southerland, the director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, unceremoniously quit today. Her claimed reasons included problems with the President's proposed budget and how much was being allocated to the EPA. This is a rather frivolous reason because, as has been well documented in the past, whatever budget the President initially submits is little more than a wish list which rarely carries any weight. Congress

controls the power of the purse, so her anger should be directed at them if the funding is not to her liking.

But as I indicated above, most of this appears to be a smokescreen anyway. Southerland is eligible for retirement and it would be surprising indeed if she chose to eschew her government employee retirement benefits in some sort of principled stand. Those benefits should be impressive to say the least, since they are always based on the time in service and best salary of the worker. In the case of Ms. Southerland, she was doing quite well for herself on the taxpayer dime. In 2016 she earned just shy of a quarter million dollars, and has done similarly well (if a bit short of that) in other years dating back to at least 2011 with the EPA when she earned \$215K. Good work if you can get it to be sure, so if she elects to walk out the door and forfeit her benefits because of her moral revulsion to the agency providing them to her, expect to see a column here from me glorifying her for her remarkable moral fortitude. (But I'm not holding my breath.)

For their part, the EPA doesn't seem to be buying the "retirement" story either, but are still wishing Ms. Southerland a gracious bon voyage. This is from EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

"It's hard to believe that Elizabeth Southerland is retiring because of a budget proposal and not because she's eligible for her government pension. We wish Elizabeth Southerland the best in her retirement and the EPA will continue to re-focus on our core mission of protecting our air, land and water."

A generous and gracious farewell. I, for one, will wait to see if Elizabeth proves me wrong and turns down all those sweet taxpayer funded retirement benefits. Perhaps she could donate them all to the federal government's general fund to help out the less fortunate.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/07/31/trumps-epa-is-the-first-in-three-decades-to-prioritize-cutting-regulations/>

Trump's EPA Is The First In Three Decades To Prioritize Cutting Regulations

By Tim Pearce, 7/31/17

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Unlike most EPA administrators, Pruitt sports a conservative view of the agency and the direction its policy should take. Usually, EPA heads are left-of-center and environmentally driven rather than economically, even under Republican presidents, Axios reported Monday.

"A few prior EPA Administrators have given lip service to regulatory reform, but they have always focused on leaving an environmental legacy," former George W. Bush administration EPA official Jeff Holmstead told Axios. "Administrator Pruitt has shown that he is much more interested in reducing regulatory burdens than in getting positive reviews from the environmental community."

When Pruitt was confirmed to head the EPA, 800 former EPA employees had signed a letter in opposition of the former Oklahoma state attorney general running the agency, Business Insider reports.

"It looks like Pruitt and the Congress and this administration are undoing EPA and their regulations,"

former assistant director of EPA Region 9's water division, Jovita Pajarillo, told Business Insider. "Reagan had tried it in the past, but I think this administration is going to go farther."

Although many former EPA officials don't agree with the tact Pruitt has taken, the EPA's first administrator, William Ruckelshaus, has admitted the agency's scope is larger now than was originally intended. "I almost hate to say yes, because it will skew what I'm about to say."

But the answer is yes," Ruckelshaus told KNKX in March after he was asked asked if the EPA had gotten "out of control and run amok." Ruckelshaus thinks Pruitt's style is an overall threat to the EPA, however.

"He can do more damage at least in my eyes, and have a bigger impact than was true of Anne Gorsuch Burford or anybody else," Ruckelshaus told Axios.

Marketplace

<https://www.marketplace.org/2017/07/31/sustainability/epa-turns-environmental-clean-away-climate-change>

EPA turns to environmental cleanup, away from climate change

By Adam Allington, 7/31/17 (Audio story)

Tomorrow , the Senate subcommittee that oversees the EPA's Superfund program is scheduled to hold a hearing on the program's work. That's the initiative, begun in 1980, that cleans up sites contaminated with hazardous materials. Under EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, the agency is refocusing its attention toward environmental cleanups. But that doesn't necessarily mean many more cleanups will get done.

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/31/us/politics/anthony-scaramucci-white-house.html?mcubz=1& r=0>

Trump Removes Anthony Scaramucci From Communications Director Role

By Maggie Haberman, Michael Shear, and Glenn Thrush, 7/31/17

President Trump has decided to remove Anthony Scaramucci from his position as communications director, three people close to the decision said Monday, relieving him just days after Mr. Scaramucci unloaded a crude verbal tirade against other senior members of the president's senior staff.

Mr. Scaramucci's abrupt removal came just 10 days after the wealthy New York financier was brought on to the West Wing staff, a move that convulsed an already chaotic White House and led to the departures of Sean Spicer, the former press secretary, and Reince Priebus, the president's first chief of staff.

The decision to remove Mr. Scaramucci, who had boasted about reporting directly to the president not the chief of staff, John F. Kelly, came at Mr. Kelly's request, the people said. Mr. Kelly made clear to members of the White House staff at a meeting Monday morning that he is in charge.

It was not clear whether Mr. Scaramucci will remain employed at the White House in another position or will leave altogether.

CNBC

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/07/31/treasury-sanctions-venezuelan-president-nicolas-maduro.html>

Treasury sanctions Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro

By Christine WangeTreasury, 7/31/17

The Treasury Department slapped sanctions on Nicolas Maduro on Monday, alleging that Venezuela's president has attempted to undermine democracy and the rule of law in his country.

On Sunday, Venezuela held a controversial election to create the National Constituent Assembly (ANC), a constitutional assembly that would grant Maduro's party sweeping power. But many countries said they would not recognize that vote.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said those who participate in the illegitimate assembly could face "future U.S. sanctions for their role in undermining democratic processes and institutions in Venezuela."

The ANC, which many expect to be stacked with Maduro supporters, would be able to rewrite the country's constitution.

In a statement, Mnuchin continued: "Yesterday's illegitimate elections confirm that Maduro is a dictator who disregards the will of the Venezuelan people. By sanctioning Maduro, the United States makes clear our opposition to the policies of his regime and our support for the people of Venezuela who seek to return their country to a full and prosperous democracy."

Venezuela has been engulfed in an economic crisis, featuring skyrocketing inflation and food shortages. The country's economy had been tied to its oil exports but was sent into a downward spiral amid crashing oil prices in 2014.

In recent months, protesters have flooded the streets of Venezuela as clashes have turned violent, with more than 100 people killed in the chaos.

What's happening in Venezuela is "the end of the constitution," national security advisor H.R. McMaster told reporters later Monday. He said that the erosion of democracy in the country has been accelerating.

"By designating Maduro himself, he joins a very exclusive club, including Mr. [Robert] Mugabe, Bashar al-Assad and Kim Jong Un," McMaster said during the daily White House press briefing.

EPA Evening News Highlights 7/31.17

The Hill: EPA head disputes charge he spends too much time at home in Oklahoma

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is disputing accusations that he spends too much time in Oklahoma and charges taxpayers for his travel there. Scott Pruitt, who has lived in Oklahoma for much of his life and was most recently its attorney general, said groups making those accusations are wrong. He blamed former Obama administration employees driven by their opposition to him for the claims. Pruitt defended himself Thursday while in Oklahoma to speak with agricultural interests about his efforts to roll back former President Barack Obama's Clean Water Rule.

Newsmax: EPA Adds Hazardous Waste Sites to Priority List

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Monday it is adding seven hazardous waste sites and proposing four new ones across the country to its list of national priorities, making them eligible to receive federal funding for cleanup. The EPA has identified the Superfund program as one of its top priorities, the centerpiece of what it calls a "Back to Basics" approach to environmental protection, focusing more on cleaning up pollution and less on battling climate change.

Breitbart: EPA Admin Scott Pruitt's Hometown Paper: Left-Wing 'Fishing Expedition' on Trips Back to Oklahoma

Pruitt's hometown newspaper, the Tulsa World, published an editorial on Sunday over the flap about Pruitt's travels, praising the native son as in touch with real Americans and accusing environmental activists of conducting a "fishing expedition." The editorial, entitled "Tulsa World editorial: Heaven forbid! Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends! A not-so-stunning revelation about the EPA chief's use of taxpayer funds."

NTK Network: Pruitt's Hometown Editorial Board Blasts His Critics

The editorial board of Tulsa World, the hometown paper of EPA chief Scott Pruitt, took time to defend its native son against attacks that he returns to Oklahoma too often. Democrats concealing themselves as the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) filed Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain Pruitt's travel schedule. Upon discovering that the EPA director returns to his home state some weekends, EIP ran to the press with their findings.

Hot Air: Another EPA Staffer "Quits" Because Of Trump (But Is Actually Retiring)

Remember when Mike Cox, a climate change adviser at the EPA, "quit" his job because of his disagreements with the Trump administration and sent in a "scathing letter of resignation?" As it turned out, Cox was actually retiring and had been eligible for retirement for some time. Well, that pattern is continuing this week. Elizabeth Southerland, the director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, unceremoniously quit today. Her claimed reasons included problems with the President's proposed budget and how much was being allocated to the EPA. This is a rather frivolous reason because, as has been well documented in the past, whatever budget the President initially submits is little more than a wish list which rarely carries any weight.

Daily Caller: Trump's EPA Is The First In Three Decades To Prioritize Cutting Regulations

Scott Pruitt is the first head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to prioritize economic growth over environmental protections since Anne Gorsuch Burford ran the EPA for former President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1983, according to Axios. Unlike most EPA administrators, Pruitt sports a conservative view of the agency and the direction its policy should take. Usually, EPA heads are left-of-center and environmentally driven rather than economically, even under Republican presidents,

Axios reported Monday.

Marketplace (NPR program): EPA turns to environmental cleanup, away from climate change

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The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344295-epa-head-disputes-charge-that-he-spends-too-much-time-in-oklahoma>

EPA head disputes charge he spends too much time at home in Oklahoma

By Timothy Cama, 7/31/17

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is disputing accusations that he spends too much time in Oklahoma and charges taxpayers for his travel there.

Scott Pruitt, who has lived in Oklahoma for much of his life and was most recently its attorney general, said groups making those accusations are wrong. He blamed former Obama administration employees driven by their opposition to him for the claims.

Pruitt defended himself Thursday while in Oklahoma to speak with agricultural interests about his efforts to roll back former President Barack Obama's Clean Water Rule.

"The folks talking about this, one, their facts are wrong, and that's not a surprise. But it's an alt-EPA," he told Oklahoma City television station Fox 25, referring to the social media identity of an anti-Trump group that claims to be EPA employees.

"It's a group of employees that worked for Obama, that formed an organization to put out these kinds of things that are not accurate and completely forthcoming as far as those issues," Pruitt continued.

In a Monday report based on agency documents, the Environmental Integrity Project said that through the end of May Pruitt has spent half of his tenure in Oklahoma.

The environmental group said the EPA paid at least \$12,000 for the airfare for those trips, since they often included at least some official responsibilities, after which Pruitt went home to Tulsa.

Pruitt was in Oklahoma for about 90 percent of the days that he traveled, the group said.

On Thursday, liberal watchdog group American Integrity asked the federal Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Pruitt's use of taxpayer funds for the trips was illegal. That group is led by former Obama administration employees.

EPA spokeswoman Amy Graham defended Pruitt, saying he properly gets reimbursed for official business and that he was working on all of the trips.

Graham also said that the original report about Pruitt's travel unfairly inflated the number of days he was in his home state.

"The inconvenient truth is that radical environmentalists are counting weekends, Mondays and Fridays spent in Washington, and holidays like Easter Sunday in their opposition research in an effort to distract from the administrator's significant accomplishments, including more than 30 regulatory actions, review of the Clean Power Plan, and rewriting the definition of a 'water of the U.S.'"

Newsmax

<http://www.newsmax.com/US/EPA-Hazardous-Waste-Sites/2017/07/31/id/804811/>

EPA Adds Hazardous Waste Sites to Priority List

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Monday it is adding seven hazardous waste sites and proposing four new ones across the country to its list of national priorities, making them eligible to receive federal funding for cleanup.

The EPA has identified the Superfund program as one of its top priorities, the centerpiece of what it calls a "Back to Basics" approach to environmental protection, focusing more on cleaning up pollution and less on battling climate change.

"My goal as administrator is to restore the Superfund program to its rightful place at the center of the agency's core mission," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said.

At least four of the 11 sites the agency added or proposed have been in operation within the last two decades and have been contaminated from a variety of sources, including manufacturing, wood treatment and aircraft maintenance.

The Superfund program has been criticized over the years for its slow efforts to clean up hazardous waste sites, which now number more than 1,300 around the country.

While Pruitt said he wants to prioritize the program, he would do so with a smaller budget. The Trump

administration's budget proposal for fiscal 2018 included a 31 percent cut for the EPA, including a similar reduction of the agency's Hazardous Substance Superfund Account to \$762 million.

Last week, Pruitt accepted the recommendations of a task force he set up in May to help restructure the Superfund program.

Among the group's recommendations were for the administrator to focus on a "top-10" list of sites, directing resources to sites that have been on the national priority list for more than five years and inviting third parties to invest in priority cleanups.

Sites that have been cleaned up through the Superfund program can be reused.

Breitbart

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/07/30/pruitts-hometown-paper-left-wing-fishing-expedition-trips-back-oklahoma/>

EPA Admin Scott Pruitt's Hometown Paper: Left-Wing 'Fishing Expedition' on Trips Back to Oklahoma

By Penny Starr, 7/30/17

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt—former Senator and Attorney General from Oklahoma—was investigated by a left-wing environmental group for his trips back to his home state, some of which included the spending of taxpayer dollars.

Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) sought information about Pruitt's trip with a Freedom of Information Act request that revealed Pruitt had traveled to Oklahoma about 10 times, ABC News reported on Friday.

The trips estimated cost is \$15,000, according to ABC News.

The report also included news that EIP has now asked for the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to investigate the matter, which legal watchdog group American Oversight said could mean Pruitt violated federal rules by using government resources for personal or political purposes.

But Pruitt's hometown newspaper, the Tulsa World, published an editorial on Sunday over the flap about Pruitt's travels, praising the native son as in touch with real Americans and accusing environmental activists of conducting a "fishing expedition."

The editorial, entitled "Tulsa World editorial: Heaven forbid! Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends! A not-so-stunning revelation about the EPA chief's use of taxpayer funds," said:

If we were supposed to [be] shocked to learn that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends, we're not.

A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered just that, and that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates don't approve of.

The New York Times first reported the results of a Freedom of Information request for Pruitt's expense accounts filed by the Environmental Integrity Project, which has a history of blocking development and encouraging regulation. The findings: Pruitt returned to his Tulsa home at least 10 times in his first three months in office, costing taxpayers more than \$15,000.

During his trips home, Pruitt made some stops, including an informational meeting at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

As outrages go, it's not worth much.

The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of "green" lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too.

We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans. If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists.

ABC also reported that Pruitt was in Oklahoma on Thursday to talk with the editorial board of the Oklahoman newspaper and with ranchers who live and work on the Oklahoma Panhandle.

A local TV station reported that Pruitt said the criticism of his travel was an attack by his critics.

"The folks talking about this, one, their facts are wrong and that's not a surprise, but it's an alt-EPA," Pruitt said.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/pruitts-hometown-editorial-board-blasts-his-critics/>

Pruitt's Hometown Editorial Board Blasts His Critics

By NTK Staff, 7/31/17

The editorial board of Tulsa World, the hometown paper of EPA chief Scott Pruitt, took time to defend its native son against attacks that he returns to Oklahoma too often.

Democrats concealing themselves as the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) filed Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain Pruitt's travel schedule. Upon discovering that the EPA director returns to his home state some weekends, EIP ran to the press with their findings.

On Sunday, Tulsa World shot back.

The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of "green" lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too.

...

It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family.

The editorial board rightly noted of EPI's efforts, "As outrages go, it's not worth much."

Hot Air

Another EPA Staffer "Quits" Because Of Trump (But Is Actually Retiring)

<http://hotair.com/archives/2017/07/31/another-epa-staffer-quits-trump-actually-retiring/>

By Jazz Shaw, 7/31/17

Remember when Mike Cox, a climate change adviser at the EPA, "quit" his job because of his disagreements with the Trump administration and sent in a "scathing letter of resignation?" As it turned out, Cox was actually retiring and had been eligible for retirement for some time.

Well, that pattern is continuing this week. Elizabeth Southerland, the director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, unceremoniously quit today. Her claimed reasons included problems with the President's proposed budget and how much was being allocated to the EPA. This is a rather frivolous reason because, as has been well documented in the past, whatever budget the President initially submits is little more than a wish list which rarely carries any weight. Congress controls the power of the purse, so her anger should be directed at them if the funding is not to her liking.

But as I indicated above, most of this appears to be a smokescreen anyway. Southerland is eligible for retirement and it would be surprising indeed if she chose to eschew her government employee retirement benefits in some sort of principled stand. Those benefits should be impressive to say the least, since they are always based on the time in service and best salary of the worker. In the case of Ms. Southerland, she was doing quite well for herself on the taxpayer dime. In 2016 she earned just shy of a quarter million dollars, and has done similarly well (if a bit short of that) in other years dating back to at least 2011 with the EPA when she earned \$215K. Good work if you can get it to be sure, so if she elects to walk out the door and forfeit her benefits because of her moral revulsion to the agency providing them to her, expect to see a column here from me glorifying her for her remarkable moral fortitude. (But I'm not holding my breath.)

For their part, the EPA doesn't seem to be buying the "retirement" story either, but are still wishing Ms. Southerland a gracious bon voyage. This is from EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox.

"It's hard to believe that Elizabeth Southerland is retiring because of a budget proposal and not because she's eligible for her government pension. We wish Elizabeth Southerland the best in her retirement and the EPA will continue to re-focus on our core mission of protecting our air, land and water."

A generous and gracious farewell. I, for one, will wait to see if Elizabeth proves me wrong and turns down all those sweet taxpayer funded retirement benefits. Perhaps she could donate them all to the federal government's general fund to help out the less fortunate.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/07/31/trumps-epa-is-the-first-in-three-decades-to-prioritize-cutting-regulations/>

Trump's EPA Is The First In Three Decades To Prioritize Cutting Regulations

By Tim Pearce, 7/31/17

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over environmental protections since Anne Gorsuch Burford ran the EPA for former President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1983, according to Axios.

Unlike most EPA administrators, Pruitt sports a conservative view of the agency and the direction its policy should take. Usually, EPA heads are left-of-center and environmentally driven rather than economically, even under Republican presidents, Axios reported Monday.

“A few prior EPA Administrators have given lip service to regulatory reform, but they have always focused on leaving an environmental legacy,” former George W. Bush administration EPA official Jeff Holmstead told Axios. “Administrator Pruitt has shown that he is much more interested in reducing regulatory burdens than in getting positive reviews from the environmental community.”

When Pruitt was confirmed to head the EPA, 800 former EPA employees had signed a letter in opposition of the former Oklahoma state attorney general running the agency, Business Insider reports.

“It looks like Pruitt and the Congress and this administration are undoing EPA and their regulations,” former assistant director of EPA Region 9’s water division, Jovita Pajarillo, told Business Insider. “Reagan had tried it in the past, but I think this administration is going to go farther.”

Although many former EPA officials don’t agree with the tact Pruitt has taken, the EPA’s first administrator, William Ruckelshaus, has admitted the agency’s scope is larger now than was originally intended. “I almost hate to say yes, because it will skew what I’m about to say.”

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By Christine WangeTreasury, 7/31/17

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In a statement, Mnuchin continued: "Yesterday's illegitimate elections confirm that Maduro is a dictator who disregards the will of the Venezuelan people. By sanctioning Maduro, the United States makes clear our opposition to the policies of his regime and our support for the people of Venezuela who seek to return their country to a full and prosperous democracy."

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What's happening in Venezuela is "the end of the constitution," national security advisor H.R. McMaster told reporters later Monday. He said that the erosion of democracy in the country has been accelerating.

"By designating Maduro himself, he joins a very exclusive club, including Mr. [Robert] Mugabe, Bashar al-Assad and Kim Jong Un," McMaster said during the daily White House press briefing.

EPA Evening News Highlights 8.15.17

E&E News: Pruitt slams 'false narrative' on climate report

U.S. EPA boss Scott Pruitt is downplaying the importance of a climate report that has sparked concerns that the Trump administration will ignore global warming data that don't fit with its political agenda. Speaking to an Iowa TV news program Sunday, Pruitt criticized what he called a "false narrative" surrounding scientists' fears that Pruitt and President Trump might dismiss the findings from 13 federal agencies that climate change is already clearly affecting the United States.

NTK Network: Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Democratic National Committee vice chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) is holding a community forum to save the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Minnesota on Tuesday. It's a curious move, given that the EPA has received bipartisan praise for its work in Minnesota under the leadership of Administrator Scott Pruitt. "Come and join Congressman Ellison along with environmental advocates, scientists, and musicians to learn about Trump's plan for the EPA and how we're fighting back in Congress," is how Ellison's Tuesday night forum is billed.

The Daily Caller: Obama EPA Paid \$347K In Incentives To 'Ineligible' Employees

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspector general's office improperly paid 11 employees about \$347,000 in "incentives and accrued leave" as part of agency-wide buyouts, according to an audit released Monday. "These 11 buyouts occurred because the OIG's Office of the Chief of Staff had weak controls for verifying that staff who were offered and accepted buyouts occupied positions" not approved by federal officials, an inspector general audit found. Investigators also found that "OIG management did not sufficiently oversee the actions of personnel in the Office of the Chief of Staff" managing the buyouts offered from 2013 to 2014. The EPA had to reduce its staff as part of budget "sequestration."

Fox News Opinion: Climate policy -- get ready for the next round of hype

Preparations are well underway in the liberal media to make August 18 a milestone in the history of climate policy. That is the date when a special U.S. government report on the state of climate science by authors from 13 federal agencies, known as the U.S. Global Change Research Program, is due to be released. But if August 18 does become a day to be remembered, it will be as a much-hyped political event, not a scientific one. The substance of the USGCRP report apparently only rehashes, at great length, research that was assessed even more exhaustively in the Fifth Assessment Report or FAR, published in 2013 by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Natural Gas Intel: EPA's Pruitt Denies White House Will Suppress Climate Change Report

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt said the agency would evaluate a report on climate change, and derided the Obama administration for its apologetic stance on the issue and on the politicization of science in general. In an interview last week with Fort Worth, TX-based WBAP-AM, Pruitt said the agency would complete its review of a draft version of a report on climate change, part of the National Climate Assessment (NCA), by a Friday deadline to do so. But he categorically denied a report by the New York Times that the Trump administration plans to suppress the report.

The Washington Examiner: New Trump executive order will hasten oil and gas pipeline permits: Industry officials

President Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday afternoon that the oil and gas industry sees as essential to speeding up pipeline reviews and permitting, in addition to other energy infrastructure projects, according to senior representatives of the oil and gas industry in unions. "We also look forward to President Trump as he signs an executive order aimed at streamlining the permitting process for infrastructure projects," said Jack Gerard, the president and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute. "There is over a trillion dollars that is expected to be invested just in building energy infrastructure that's separate and apart from building highways, bridges, etc."

National Evening News Highlights 8.15.17

The Hill: GOP stands by Trump after Charlottesville

Republicans in Washington are largely standing by President Trump despite discomfort with his response to the violent and deadly clashes in Charlottesville, Va. Although they are openly questioning why it took Trump 48 hours to forcefully denounce the KKK members, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who turned a quiet, peaceful college town into a deadly war zone, they say they don't think the president is a racist and that they are ready to work with him on policy.

Bloomberg View: Democrats Fret as Clinton Book Rollout Looms

Democrats, reveling in President Donald Trump's plummeting popularity and the Republican Party's civil wars, are looking forward to September. Except for one thing: the rollout of Hillary Clinton's next book right after Labor Day. Clinton has promised to "let my guard down" in the book, "What Happened," explaining her shocking loss to Trump in November. She has already offered up several explanations, blaming Russian interference, former FBI director James Comey, and misogyny, while also acknowledging tactical errors by her campaign.

Washington Free Beacon: Al Qaeda Publishes Blueprint for Attacks on Key U.S. Transportation Systems

The al Qaeda terror group's chief bomb maker has published a blueprint for new attacks on U.S. transportation systems, including planes, trains, and boats, which the terror group views as "prime targets," according to a copy of a lengthy manifesto that provides a guide for would-be terrorists to launch attacks. Ibrahim al-Asiri, a top al Qaeda leader known as the terror group's chief bomb maker, detailed the extremist organization's plans to target U.S. passenger and shipping transportation services, which the terror organization views as weak links ripe for attack.

TRUMP TWEETS

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/15/stories/1060058771>

Pruitt slams 'false narrative' on climate report

By Niina Heikkinen, 8/15/17

U.S. EPA boss Scott Pruitt is downplaying the importance of a climate report that has sparked concerns that the Trump administration will ignore global warming data that don't fit with its political agenda.

Speaking to an Iowa TV news program Sunday, Pruitt criticized what he called a "false narrative" surrounding scientists' fears that Pruitt and President Trump might dismiss the findings from 13 federal agencies that climate change is already clearly affecting the United States.

"The report doesn't impact the process," Pruitt told KCCI News in Des Moines. "It doesn't impact the responsibilities that we are taking already with respect to CO2. And so I think some of those are simply legend and false narrative that people try to put on the marketplace."

The draft section of the National Climate Assessment has attracted national attention since it was reported on by The New York Times last week.

The report contradicts Pruitt and others in the Trump administration who argue that the causes of climate change are difficult to pin down precisely. It states that humans are already having a clear impact on the climate, from more heat waves to fewer cold days (Climatewire, Aug. 9).

Last week, Pruitt told a conservative Dallas radio show on WBAP that EPA and the other 12 agencies would be reviewing the draft report's methodology. He said that the report ought to be subjected to objective peer review and that science should not be "thrown around to dictate policy in Washington, D.C." (Greenwire, Aug. 11).

Discussing the report on Sunday, Pruitt touted U.S. efforts to cut carbon dioxide emissions, pointing to technological innovations and EPA partnerships with industry.

The United States does not "have anything to be apologetic about" when it comes to controlling CO2 emissions, he said.

As he has in previous media appearances, Pruitt credited advances in hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling for reducing CO2 emissions domestically.

"If we really care about our environment and CO2 reduction, then we ought to produce more here, because we do it better than India, we do it better than China, and people who have traveled to those places know that. They know that from the air that they breathe there," he said.

Pruitt also praised the Clean Air Act for leading to a 65 percent reduction in air pollutants since 1980. He contrasted the U.S. regulatory system to that of Italy, which he called "deficient" compared with the United States because it lacked its own Clean Air Act and did not partner with industry.

"I think we're making tremendous progress as a country and we are going to continue to do that, and as we evaluate this going forward, we are going to continue to ask the question, what authority do we have to regulate greenhouse gases and CO2 under the Clean Air Act?" he said.

Pruitt's comments came as he travels around the country in a "State Action Tour" this summer. He is aiming to visit 25 states by the end of August. Much of the tour's focus has been on the administration's rollback of the controversial Clean Water Rule, but he has also responded to a number of questions from local media about what the administration should be doing about climate change.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/here-is-why-keith-ellisons-community-forum-to-save-the-epa-is-pointless/>

Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

By NTK Staff, 8/15/17

Democratic National Committee vice chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) is holding a community forum to save the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Minnesota on Tuesday. It's a curious move, given that the EPA has received bipartisan praise for its work in Minnesota under the leadership of Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Come and join Congressman Ellison along with environmental advocates, scientists, and musicians to learn about Trump's plan for the EPA and how we're fighting back in Congress," is how Ellison's Tuesday night forum is billed.

Ellison's attacks on the EPA, and specifically its work in Minnesota, are strange given that Pruitt has received praise in the state of Minnesota for his support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Additionally, Minnesota's Democratic Governor Mark Dayton has praised Pruitt for working to eliminate the federal government's red tape.

"Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies," Minnesota Public Radio wrote in July.

During a visit to Minnesota in July, Pruitt "affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative."

According to The Star Tribune, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative "provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior."

The Star Tribune's editorial board, which is a traditionally liberal-leaning paper, praised Pruitt for his support for the Great Lakes restoration project.

"Last month, Governor Dayton praised EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to eliminate federal bureaucracy to state agencies, and The Star Tribune applauded Pruitt's efforts to protect the Great Lakes. Administrator Pruitt is committed to protecting Minnesota's environment and provide Americans with regulatory certainty," an EPA spokesman said in a statement.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/15/obama-epa-paid-347k-in-incentives-to-ineligible-employees/>

Obama EPA Paid \$347K In Incentives To 'Ineligible' Employees

By Michael Bastasch, 8/15/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspector general's office improperly paid 11 employees about \$347,000 in "incentives and accrued leave" as part of agency-wide buyouts, according to an audit released Monday.

"These 11 buyouts occurred because the OIG's Office of the Chief of Staff had weak controls for verifying that staff who were offered and accepted buyouts occupied positions" not approved by federal officials, an inspector general audit found.

Investigators also found that "OIG management did not sufficiently oversee the actions of personnel in the Office of the Chief of Staff" managing the buyouts offered from 2013 to 2014. The EPA had to reduce its staff as part of budget "sequestration."

That year, Republicans and then-President Barack Obama couldn't agree on a budget, so automatic cuts to federal agencies took effect.

The Obama administration gave the EPA approval to offer employees \$25,000 to retire, and 23 inspector general's office employees took the incentives when offered. In total, the IG's office handed out \$859,000 worth of retirement and leave incentives.

However, nearly half the IG officials who took buyouts weren't eligible to receive them, according to investigators. These employees "did not occupy positions matching the organizational unit, geographic location, occupational series, grade level and other factors," the Office of Personnel Management approved.

"The misapplication of buyout authority resulted in the OIG paying approximately \$347,000 in incentives and accrued leave for OIG employees in positions that were not in the OPM-approved buyout plan," investigators found.

On top of that, the inspector general's office did not eliminate the positions being held by the 23 employees who got buyouts. The office "potentially hired five new staff into positions that should have been abolished," the audit found.

"A Criminal Investigator and an Auditor were hired into positions with the same job series, grade, full performance level and location as staff who had accepted a buyout," the report read. "In addition, the Office of Investigations hired three other Criminal Investigators into vacated positions that should have been abolished but were instead restructured."

Fox News Opinion

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/08/15/climate-policy-get-ready-for-next-round-hype.htm.html>

Climate policy—get ready for the next round of hype

By W. David Montgomery, 8/15/17

Preparations are well underway in the liberal media to make August 18 a milestone in the history of climate policy. That is the date when a special U.S. government report on the state of climate science by authors from 13 federal agencies,

known as the U.S. Global Change Research Program, is due to be released.

But if August 18 does become a day to be remembered, it will be as a much-hyped political event, not a scientific one. The substance of the USGCRP report apparently only rehashes, at great length, research that was assessed even more exhaustively in the Fifth Assessment Report or FAR, published in 2013 by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The report's claim of progress is supported by lists of advances in climate science since 2013, but the major conclusions of the report are no different from the FAR and are based on the same materials. Over and over, the report states that support for its conclusions comes from the FAR.

What is different is that the well-known research findings--well known to experts, anyway-- are summarized in the USGCRP document in a way that makes them appear newer, stronger and more alarmist than they really are.

The New York Times stoked the hype by claiming on August 7 that it had unearthed the report from where it was being hidden by Trump Administration doubters, when in truth drafts of the report were readily available and posted for public comment.

Then the Times became excited about how the report would finally force the administration to admit the reality of climate change. The Times even embedded a video of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in one article, with the heading "A draft report by scientists from 13 federal agencies directly contradicts statements by Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, that human contribution to climate change is uncertain." But the USGCRP report itself recognizes and describes the uncertainty of climate science, which all involved except the Times editors understand.

The headline and editorial writers are having a wonderful time inventing claims about how novel and definitive the report will be. They are aided and abetted by selective summarizing of key sections of the report.

For example: "Attribution" is the term applied to efforts to determine how much of the observed increase in global average temperature since 1950 is caused by human activity, principally carbon dioxide emissions and land use change.

The upcoming report claims there has been substantial progress in attribution research since the IPCC covered this topic extensively in 2013. At that time, the IPCC declined to give a single number for the share attributable to human activity. The definitive statement of the IPCC was that more than half of observed warming was attributable to human activity.

In contrast, the USGCRP report claims that human activity was responsible for 100 percent of observed warming.

This major rewording comes despite the fact that the USGCRP report relies exclusively on the FAR for its calculations of the human share of warming. Nor does the report cite new evidence that would justify its shock-value conclusion.

The new summary judgments are made subjectively by the authors of the report, who are all government employees working on climate research or academics supported by government climate funding. I question why these authors chose to make the scarier statement when they could have relied on the IPCC report to settle the attribution question.

This pattern is repeated through the major findings. Summary statements are phrased to give the impression of greater certainty and larger impacts than either the text of the report or the earlier FAR support.

For example, the report highlights a statement about decreases in surface soil moisture in the United States but leaves for the reader to unearth the statement that "Little evidence is found for a human influence on observed precipitation deficits."

In other words, the report admits that there is low confidence in attribution of drought on a global scale to human

influence on climate.

As another example, the report discusses how changes in the El Nino weather phenomenon and in ocean currents have contributed to recent extreme weather events. But then the USGCRP report admits that there is little evidence of human influence on past changes in either El Nino or ocean currents.

The discussion of projected impacts of warming is wide open to selective quotation because it frequently starts with a broad statement of a tendency and then admits that it is impossible to say how large the effect will be. For example, the statement that sea level rise will increase flooding due to coastal storms is later qualified by the statement that there is “low confidence in the magnitude” of the increase in flood risk.

Likewise, the upcoming report highlights a statement that extreme temperatures in the U.S. are likely to increase “even more” than average temperatures, but a description of the beneficial effect of fewer severely cold days and fewer cold waves is left hidden in the text.

The agencies’ report also gives emphasis to the possibility of unanticipated and impossible-to-manage changes in the climate system in the next century. This is a topic likely to attract editorial attention, but a closer reading of the text reveals that highlighted risk is only speculation about a physical possibility.

In its discussion of specific examples, such as a catastrophic change in ocean circulation patterns, the report emphasizes predicted risks that the FAR concluded were minimal through the rest of the century.

Given the uproar over President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, statements in the report about that topic are also likely to be widely quoted. Here the report is subtle in how it summarizes findings about the importance of that agreement.

It states that “successful implementation of the first round of Nationally Determined Contributions associated with the Paris Agreement will provide some likelihood of meeting the long-term temperature goal [of] 2oC.”

That could suggest to a reader that the Paris Agreement was well on its way to achieving the goal, but the study cited in the report concludes that the Paris Agreement only increases the probability of achieving the target from zero to eight percent.

In other words, the odds of global temperature increases staying below 2oC remain at 12 to 1 against, even with the Paris Agreement.

The report raises the stakes for the Paris Agreement by describing the 2oC goal as “what scientists have referred to as the guardrail beyond which changes become catastrophic.”

Nothing in the USGCRP report or the FAR supports calling 2oC a guarantee of no harmful effects or a trigger that ensures catastrophe if it is exceeded. Moreover, the very study cited in the discussion of the Paris Agreement found that there was no scenario for the Paris Agreement that gave better than a 50-50 chance of staying below 2oC.

One claim in the USGCRP report is not about climate but about research activities, and it is quite understandable. It is that there have been major advances in climate science since 2013. The USGCRP is a target in the 2018 budget, and reporting recent achievements sends the message that cutting the USGCRP budget will shut off the progress.

There has been considerable interesting work on climate change in the past four years, but the progress of climate science has been fitful. FAR revealed, for example, that on the most important indicator of uncertainty in climate science--the likely range of warming for a given increase in carbon dioxide emissions--progress was actually retrograde.

Indeed, the FAR widened the likely range of temperature increase for a doubling of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from the previous assessment, indicating greater uncertainty, not less, about this issue.

In summary, there is little new about climate science in the report, and nothing at all new about attribution of past warming and extreme weather events to human activity, projections of future warming and its effects, or potential for catastrophic changes.

Thus as far as the science goes, there is little to advance the case of any side in the debate over climate policy. That makes the publication of the report more a hook for stories that one side or another wants to tell than an actual item of news in itself.

Despite its claims to make no policy recommendations, the USGCRP report does its best to make the Paris climate agreement appear more important than it is.

There is also evidence of selective summarizing, to make statements about possible harmful effects of climate change easy to find and quote while leaving it to the reader to unearth statements about the potentially small magnitude of those effects.

Any quotation from the report, especially of statements that some bad effect will increase without specifics of how much and whether there is human influence, should be checked against the full text.

Or, if there is no time for that, it should be taken with a large dose of salt.

Natural Gas Intel

<http://www.naturalgasintel.com/articles/111405-epas-pruitt-denies-white-house-will-suppress-climate-change-report>

EPA's Pruitt Denies White House Will Suppress Climate Change Report

By Charlie Passut, 8/15/17

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt said the agency would evaluate a report on climate change, and derided the Obama administration for its apologetic stance on the issue and on the politicization of science in general.

In an interview last week with Fort Worth, TX-based WBAP-AM, Pruitt said the agency would complete its review of a draft version of a report on climate change, part of the National Climate Assessment (NCA), by a Friday deadline to do so. But he categorically denied a report by the New York Times that the Trump administration plans to suppress the report.

"We're going to review it, like all the other 12 agencies [required to review it] and evaluate the merits, demerits and the methodology and accuracy of the report," Pruitt said last Thursday. "[But] frankly, this report ought to be subjected to peer review methodology and evaluation.

"Science should not be politicized. Science is not something that should be thrown about to try to dictate policy in Washington, DC. It ought to be objectively measured, and we ought to be able to inform our citizens about what we know and what we don't know."

Under the Global Change Research Act of 1990, Congress mandated that an NCA is produced every four years. A draft version of the climate assessment was completed in June.

During the interview, Pruitt said the United States had reduced its carbon dioxide (CO₂) footprint to pre-1994 levels through the use of innovation and technology. He cited the use of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas production and the switch to natural gas for power generation as major reasons for lower CO₂ emissions.

"If we really care about reducing CO2 globally, we need to be exporting what we're doing in this country," Pruitt said. "What's lost in this whole discussion about climate and climate change [is that] warming happens. So do cooling trends.

"The climate changes always. Do we contribute to it? Yes. To what degree? Measuring that with precision is very challenging. But the big question is this: What is the process, and what do we do in response? We're already leading the world in the reduction of greenhouse gases [and] CO2. We need to be exporting what we're doing, not being apologetic about it here in this country."

He added that the Trump administration's decision this summer to withdraw from the 2015 global climate agreement signed in Paris in 2015 was "without question" the right decision.

"That was the Obama administration going to Paris and being apologetic, and not recognizing the very things that we've done as a country," Pruitt said. "The Paris accord was a bad business deal for this country, and represented an apologetic view of the progress we've already made as a country in leading these CO2 reductions."

When asked why his critics continue to have a preoccupation with CO2, Pruitt responded that such criticism "serves political ends."

"Frankly, [for] the last several years the past administration used the CO2 issue as a wedge issue. That's why we talk about it as much. Why aren't we celebrating what we're achieving with respect to CO2?"

Pruitt added that while he believes "there are a lot of good, hard-working folks" at the EPA, the agency "lost their mission" during the Obama years.

"There are many examples where the agency just hasn't done its core mission, and most importantly to me is that they haven't worked with their partners," he said. "One of the things that I've been focusing on is restoring that trust."

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/new-trump-executive-order-will-hasten-oil-and-gas-pipeline-permits-industry-officials/article/2631611>

New Trump executive order will hasten oil and gas pipeline permits: Industry officials

By John Siciliano, 8/15/17

President Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday afternoon that the oil and gas industry sees as essential to speeding up pipeline reviews and permitting, in addition to other energy infrastructure projects, according to senior representatives of the oil and gas industry in unions.

"We also look forward to President Trump as he signs an executive order aimed at streamlining the permitting process for infrastructure projects," said Jack Gerard, the president and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute. "There is over a trillion dollars that is expected to be invested just in building energy infrastructure that's separate and apart from building highways, bridges, etc."

Gerard previewed the president's action while discussing a new report that showed the enormous benefit from pipeline development to jobs creation and the economy.

Moving "permits in a timely fashion" will only increase the benefits of opening up private investment in the nation's pipeline infrastructure, he said. Gerard said the oil and natural gas industry employs close to 10.3 million Americans in the U.S., and "it's critical that we have this infrastructure ... and pipelines are essential."

The oil and gas industry ships 99.9 percent of all its raw and refined products through pipelines, Gerard said.

"We applaud [the president's] efforts and the efforts on the part of the administration to create jobs and help continue the renaissance" in energy, Gerard told reporters.

Part of the permitting process for projects includes environmental impact reviews that are required under the National Environmental Policy Act. The law requires that all infrastructure projects be reviewed for their impacts on local ecology and the environment. But a lot of time those reviews can be bogged down by a process that requires input from a number of agencies.

The president's order comes after the administration has had several months to review the permitting process and find ways of expediting it, said Sean McGarvey, president of North America's Building Trades Unions, who chairs the oil and gas labor management committee.

"I think they will come out with a good product under this executive order that will protect the environment" while still providing for jobs and the economy, he said. McGarvey said he expects the president's order to better coordinate agencies to ensure the permitting process is not "death of a thousand paper cuts," where projects are scuttled because the bureaucracy is too sprawling and complex.

Gerard said he believes the president's goal is to achieve permits taking no longer than two years. He said the oil industry has faced circumstances when it is waiting for permits for nearly a decade with no way of knowing when they will be approved. "And it makes no sense at all," he added.

Meanwhile, the president of the New Jersey chapter of the environmental group Sierra Club expects the order to also roll back an Obama administration executive order that "required strict building standards for government-funded projects to reduce exposure to increased flooding from sea level rise" due to climate change.

"Obama originally signed this executive order to help protect people and property from climate change and sea level rise," said Jeff Tittel, the director of the New Jersey chapter. "The strict standards in the EO were meant to protect against climate change.

"Getting rid of these standards will put vital infrastructure and buildings at risk. All the taxpayer money could wash out to sea in the next storm. Flooding and inundation are only going to become more dangerous and common, especially in our coastal communities."

The Obama order was put in place in response to Hurricane Sandy that pummeled the East Coast in 2012.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/346605-gop-stands-by-trump-after-charlottesville>

GOP stands by Trump after Charlottesville

By Scott Wong, 8/15/17

Republicans in Washington are largely standing by President Trump despite discomfort with his response to the violent and deadly clashes in Charlottesville, Va.

Although they are openly questioning why it took Trump 48 hours to forcefully denounce the KKK members, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who turned a quiet, peaceful college town into a deadly war zone, they say they don't think the president is a racist and that they are ready to work with him on policy.

"I don't think the president is some sort of closet racist who's deliberately stirring up the devils of our nature," Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), a veteran lawmaker and former member of leadership, told The Hill.

"Because of the nature of the attack, he should have been more specific. Within 48 hours, he was," Cole added.

“Probably he missed an opportunity, but we’re all singing from the same song book now, and that’s a good thing.”

Republicans across the political spectrum were quick to denounce the white nationalists who marched on Charlottesville last weekend, one of whom is charged with plowing his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, killing a woman and injuring 19 others. And many Republicans criticized Trump’s response blaming “many sides” for the violence as lackluster at best.

Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner, who leads Senate Republicans’ 2018 campaign efforts, scolded Trump on Twitter for failing to directly call out the “evil” as “white supremacists” and “domestic terrorism.”

At the same time, congressional Republicans didn’t ditch Trump in droves as they did last fall after a leaked 2005 “Access Hollywood” tape revealed the then-GOP nominee privately bragging that he can grope women because he’s a celebrity.

Days before Election Day, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) held a conference call with rank-and-file members and announced he would no longer defend or campaign with Trump. And he gave his fellow Republicans the green light to cut Trump loose if it would help them win reelection.

There were none of those actions this time, and some Republicans were quick to defend Trump, particularly after he denounced the far-right groups by name on Monday.

The political reaction largely fits a familiar pattern that’s recurred throughout Trump’s candidacy and first 200 days in office: outrage from liberals, Democrats, “Never Trump” Republicans and a handful of others, while most Republicans try their best to duck and downplay the controversy and pivot back to their stalled GOP agenda.

“I think the left is trying to make this political and it shouldn’t be,” said one vulnerable House Republican. “I’m disgusted by the heat from both sides.”

“I believe his message has been clear that racism, bigotry and hatred is not American and must be rejected in its entirety,” added Rep. Tom Reed (R-N.Y.) a Trump ally who said he still backs the president.

Asked if he had any concerns about Trump’s initial response, a top aide to a conservative congressman replied: “None.”

“Despite whatever faults Trump has, he is not racist or anti-Semitic. ... Trump did not earn this.”

The GOP-controlled House Judiciary and Homeland Security committees currently have no plans to hold hearings into the Charlottesville attack or on why white supremacist groups appear to be on the rise, GOP sources said, though they face pressure to do so from Democrats.

All GOP leaders seem to want to talk about is overhauling the outdated tax code, something they’ll need Trump to sign. Ryan has been tweeting nonstop about his party’s efforts to enact tax reform this fall.

In the wake of the attack, the Trump administration’s actions speak louder than any words the president utters, said Cole, who was serving as Oklahoma secretary of state when domestic terrorists blew up a federal building in the heart of Oklahoma City. Attorney General Jeff Sessions made clear the Justice Department and FBI are investigating whether Saturday’s deadly attack can be prosecuted under federal hate crimes and domestic terrorism laws.

“That’s pretty swift and stern stuff,” Cole said.

To the “Never Trump” crowd of Republicans critical of the president, Charlottesville represents a defining moment for the party.

They fear that a Republican Party that becomes identified too closely with Trump risks permanently alienating a more diverse, less white electorate. Republicans are also losing ground with young people: A recent poll showed that only 22 percent of millennials approve of Trump's job performance, while 62 percent disapproved.

"I think this is life or death for the Republican party. That's not an overstatement," Rick Tyler, the former spokesman to Sen. Ted Cruz's (R-Texas) presidential campaign, said on MSNBC.

"He's not only unfit to be president ... he's unfit to be human," another vocal Trump critic, GOP strategist Ana Navarro, proclaimed on CNN.

One thing to watch will be whether Trump's already dismal approval among voters drops further in Charlottesville's aftermath. On Monday, Gallup's average of polls showed that only 34 percent of Americans approved of Trump, an all-time low for the president, while 61 percent disapproved, an all-time high.

If his popularity slips further, rank-and-file Republicans may have no choice but to dump Trump and distance themselves from a toxic and volatile president, especially with Democrats fighting to take back power in the House and Senate in 2018.

GOP strategists said the president simply can't afford another drop in the polls.

"Trump's low poll numbers makes everything harder for his administration," said Alex Conant, a former top aide to Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), one of Trump's presidential primary rivals. "With less public support, he'll find that he has even less political capital when Congress returns" to Washington after Labor Day.

Trump's handling of Charlottesville was certainly "not helpful," Conant added, but it's too early to evaluate whether it did any lasting damage to the brand of the Party of Lincoln.

"In the past, voters have treated Trump as an independent political brand, rather than the leader of the GOP," argued Conant, a veteran of the Republican National Committee and the George W. Bush White House. "That's how so many Republican candidates were able to run ahead of him last year."

Bloomberg View

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-08-15/democrats-fret-as-clinton-book-rollout-looms>

Democrats Fret as Clinton Book Rollout Looms

By Albert Hunt, 8/15/17

Democrats, reveling in President Donald Trump's plummeting popularity and the Republican Party's civil wars, are looking forward to September. Except for one thing: the rollout of Hillary Clinton's next book right after Labor Day.

Clinton has promised to "let my guard down" in the book, "What Happened," explaining her shocking loss to Trump in November. She has already offered up several explanations, blaming Russian interference, former FBI director James Comey, and misogyny, while also acknowledging tactical errors by her campaign.

Many Washington Democrats, though unwilling to criticize her in public, wish she'd "move on," as Senator Al Franken has put it. They fear that her complaints help Trump make his case that the controversies surrounding him flow from the Democrats' bitterness about their 2016 loss.

They prefer the approach taken by Al Gore after his equally controversial loss in 2000. Gore didn't really criticize the administration of President George W. Bush for almost two years, even though he, like Clinton, won the popular vote while losing in the Electoral College. (Gore lost when the Supreme Court stopped a vote recount in Florida.) Gore went on to start a new career, winning a Nobel Prize and Academy Award for his work on climate change.

Associates hoped Clinton would also find a way to make a different contribution, perhaps as a university president or foundation head. There have even been suggestions that she move overseas for a couple of years.

Clinton could make a contribution speaking out selectively on important issues, drawing on her wealth of experience.

But she remains haunted by her defeat. The gist of her message next month, based on her public statements and accounts of private conversations from people who've talked to her, will be: I accept the blame for what happened, but the bigger problems were Russian meddling, Comey's on-again, off-again handling of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's probe of her private email server, the Democratic Party, and maybe even some of her own campaign staffers.

The Clintons, associates say, are convinced that the election was stolen. They may be right; we'll find out soon enough whether there's proof that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia. If investigations by congressional committees and special counsel Robert Mueller turn up new facts, that'll provide a better basis for analyzing the impact.

But Clinton is the wrong messenger. She just comes across as a sore loser.

Or as Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer told the Washington Post last month: "When you lose to somebody who has 40-percent popularity, you don't blame other things -- Comey, Russia -- you blame yourself."

She could take a lesson from another prominent Democrat, one who has kept a relatively low profile since January. That's former President Barack Obama, who has mostly resisted the temptation to strike back at repeated Trump cheap shots. Today, surveys of voters have found, he's the most popular American politician. Some Democrats want him to take on Trump a bit more, and are pleased he'll be out campaigning for a few Democrats this fall.

By contrast, Clinton has moved from being an admired former New York senator and secretary of state to becoming a divisive and unpopular figure. In last month's Bloomberg national poll, 58 percent of respondents rated her unfavorably compared to 39 percent who gave her favorable marks. More than one in five people who voted for her in November now regard her unfavorably. That was even worse than Trump's standing in the same poll.

Indeed, the only figure with higher negatives in the survey, which was conducted by the Iowa polling firm Selzer & Co., was her old nemesis, Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/al-qaeda-publishes-blueprint-attacks-key-u-s-transportation-systems/>

Al Qaeda Publishes Blueprint for Attacks on Key U.S. Transportation Systems

By Adam Kredo, 8/15/17

The al Qaeda terror group's chief bomb maker has published a blueprint for new attacks on U.S. transportation systems, including planes, trains, and boats, which the terror group views as "prime targets," according to a copy of a lengthy manifesto that provides a guide for would-be terrorists to launch attacks.

Ibrahim al-Asiri, a top al Qaeda leader known as the terror group's chief bomb maker, detailed the extremist organization's plans to target U.S. passenger and shipping transportation services, which the terror organization views as weak links ripe for attack.

While al Qaeda's operations have been weakened by years of U.S. attacks on its key locations and apparatus, it has increasingly relied on promulgating its radical ideology to so-called "lone wolves" who are not officially affiliated with the group but who are capable of carrying out terror attacks without detection by American authorities.

The shift to lone-wolf attacks highlights al Qaeda's continued influence and brand strength among jihadists following the rise of splinter groups such as ISIS. Al Qaeda is still a primary source of concern for the U.S. intelligence community, which continues to see the group as a central threat against American safety.

Al-Asiri emphasizes in his manifesto, published in the latest issue of al Qaeda's chief propaganda organ Inspire Magazine, that lone jihadists could easily carry out terror attacks on bustling locales, such as airports and train stations.

"We will be focusing on targeting means of transportation," the terror leader writes in the English-language article, which was first highlighted by the Middle East Media Research Institute. "We will explain more on this, which is part of the general policy of targeting the ring of security in the chain."

"When referring to transportation we refer to air, sea, and ground transportation—both local and international. Jihad groups and organizations may have the ability to target international means of transportation," according to the al Qaeda leader. "As for the Lone Mujahid, his abilities may be limited to targeting internal means of transportation of a country. And it is possible for him to draw a comprehensive plan so as to execute such kind of operations."

Trains are of particular significance to this plan, especially freight trains that carry a range of key consumer products.

"In America, trains are considered to be among the most important means of transportation within the country," the article states. "What becomes apparent is that it is too difficult to protect these means of transportation. And here is where we find its vulnerability—means of transportation today are considered to be a weak point which we must focus on."

The al Qaeda leader urges potential terrorists to focus on three key areas: The trains themselves, the routes they follow, and stations they might stop at.

Due to the difficulty in policing and monitoring these areas, they are viewed as a prime target to cause the most mayhem. An attack would not only disrupt the U.S. economy, but foster panic in the American population and drain many resources, according to the blueprint.

"Some transport companies may get into bankruptcy if targeted regularly and are unable to secure themselves, this will make people seize using such a company for their transportation needs," according to the article. "These are the most important consequences that may accompany these kind of operations."

Attacks of this nature can be carried out on a small budget and cause significant amounts of damage and death, which is of particular interest to al Qaeda.

"With little resources, it is possible to achieve great results, this is, if the operations is well executed and planned," according to the blueprint article. "The results of these kind of operations are disastrous to the economy, especially if they occur regularly."

"It is difficult for the authorities to secure all security loopholes in these operations," the terror leader states. "The ability to use different kinds of weapons, and ways to subdue the enemy according to the conditions and circumstances at hand."

The article ends with al Qaeda's traditional call to violence against America and its Western allies.

"Target America, by Allah they are in a great predicament," the article states. "We should continue to focus our efforts against it until the world gets rid of this international system led by America, and until Muslims enjoy freedom to practice their faith, freedom to apply the Laws of Allah and until Muslims secure themselves, wealth and resources from the hands of America."

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · 8h

Big day in Alabama. Vote for Luther Strange, he will be great!



12K



8.3K



39K



Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · 5h

For every CEO that drops out of the Manufacturing Council, I have many to take their place. Grandstanders should not have gone on. JOBS!



34K



14K



57K



EPA Morning News Highlights 7.28.17

New York Daily News: EPA rolls out \$39.4M plan to clean up radioactive site in Ridgewood

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a comprehensive plan Thursday to clean up radioactive contamination by a former Queens chemical plant. The \$39.4 million proposal calls for the demolition of several buildings near the old Wolff-Alport Chemical Co. on Irving Ave. in Ridgewood. EPA officials will first try to get the polluters to cover the tab. If that doesn't work, the site will have to compete against others in the nation over a limited pool of federal funds. But the Superfund cleanup may never get off the ground during the Trump administration.

SNJ Today: EPA Proposing Plan to Remove Lead, Arsenic from Gibbsboro Superfund Site

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a new plan to remove dangerous contaminants from the soil of an outdated paint plant in Gibbsboro. The new plan would remove lead and arsenic, which are toxic and potentially damaging to the public's health, from contaminated soil and sediment at the United States Avenue Burn superfund site in Gloucester County. The site is near a former paint manufacturing plant and was once used as paint waste dump.

Tulsa World: EPA asks oil producers to shut seven wastewater wells along Bird Creek spill area

The Environmental Protection Agency has found the source of saltwater contamination in Bird Creek and is asking Osage County oil producers to cease wastewater injection at seven well sites. Nearly a year after the Bird Creek saltwater contamination first was reported, EPA Region Six Administrator Sam Coleman said brine contamination in the drainage is a long-standing problem, has multiple sources, likely was most recently exacerbated by mechanical failures, may encompass a wider area than is presently known, and may lead to more frequent reporting requirements for producers. Coleman said the Bird Creek situation simply runs counter to the agency's basic tenet.

The Courier-Times: EPA concludes industrial site clean up

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Bloomberg: Obamacare Repeal Collapses as Senate GOP Blocks Health Bill

A months-long effort by Senate Republicans to pass health legislation collapsed early Friday after GOP Senator John McCain joined two of his colleagues to block a stripped-down Obamacare repeal bill. "I regret that our efforts were simply not enough, this time," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on the Senate floor after the vote. "This is clearly a disappointing moment." "It's time to move on," he added after pulling the bill from the floor.

The Wall Street Journal: Bad News If You Make \$150,000 to \$300,000: Higher Taxes for Many

If President Donald Trump sticks to what he has said, Americans earning between \$149,400 and \$307,900 are most likely to see an increase in their taxes as a result of tax reform. Those figures come from a recent study by the Tax Policy Center, a nonpartisan group in Washington, and are based on Mr. Trump's statements and proposals. The study concludes that nearly one-third of about 19 million households in that income range could see tax increases averaging from \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year.

The Hill: Intelligence chairman accuses Obama aides of hundreds of unmasking requests

The chairman of the House Intelligence Committee is accusing top political aides of President Obama of making hundreds of requests during the 2016 presidential race to unmask the names of Americans in intelligence reports, including Trump transition officials. Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), in a letter to Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, said the requests were made without specific justifications on why the information was needed.

The New York Daily News

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/epa-rolls-plan-clean-radioactive-site-ridgewood-article-1.3362738>

EPA rolls out \$39.4M plan to clean up radioactive site in Ridgewood

By Reuven Blau, 7/27/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a comprehensive plan Thursday to clean up radioactive contamination by a former Queens chemical plant.

The \$39.4 million proposal calls for the demolition of several buildings near the old Wolff-Alport Chemical Co. on Irving Ave. in Ridgewood.

EPA officials will first try to get the polluters to cover the tab. If that doesn't work, the site will have to compete against others in the nation over a limited pool of federal funds.

But the Superfund cleanup may never get off the ground during the Trump administration.

The president has called for an approximately 30% cut to the EPA's budget.

But the agency is confident the work will get done despite the constraints,

"It looks like we will be able to proceed with the cleanup," said EPA spokesman Elias Rodriguez.

The project will likely take years to complete, he added.

It will entail the "permanent relocation of five commercial businesses," the EPA said.

Those businesses are, Primo Auto Body, TerraNova, Celtic Bike Shop, Jarabacoa Deli and K & M Auto Repair.

The EPA will help with relocation costs.

"While we recognize that relocation will be a stress on these businesses, we are weighing that against the long-term risks from radiation, which include an increased risk of cancer," said Catherine McCabe, EPA's acting regional administrator.

The area was designated a Superfund site in 2014 after discovering potentially dangerous levels of radioactive contamination.

Chemists at the company-which operated there from 1920 until 1954, developed materials for the Atomic Energy Commission.

The firm tossed thorium waste into the sewer and on the property, according to the EPA. The company was ordered to stop in 1947, officials said.

The EPA has been monitoring the area for years.

Agency officials are now seeking public comment on the broad plan.

The details will be discussed during a meeting at the Audrey Johnson Day Care Center on Moffat St., Brooklyn at 7 p.m. on Aug. 16.

South Jersey News

<http://www.snjtoday.com/story/35987481/epa-proposing-plan-to-remove-lead-arsenic-from-gibbsboro-superfund-site>

EPA Proposing Plan to Remove Lead, Arsenic from Gibbsboro Superfund Site

By SNJ Staff, 7/27/17

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a new plan to remove dangerous contaminants from the soil of an outdated paint plant in Gibbsboro.

The new plan would remove lead and arsenic, which are toxic and potentially damaging to the public's health, from contaminated soil and sediment at the United States Avenue Burn superfund site in Gloucester County. The site is near a former paint manufacturing plant and was once used as paint waste dump.

The EPA will hold a public meeting on Thursday, August 10th, at 7 p.m. at the Gibbsboro Senior Center on Haddonfield-Berlin Road to explain the clean-up proposal and other options that are being considered.

Public comments are welcomed and will be accepted until Monday, August 28th.

To view the proposed plan, visit EPA.gov.

Tulsa World

http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/state/epa-asks-oil-producers-to-shut-seven-wastewater-wells-along/article_17ef8431-19fa-5a24-8d86-bf4ef62c54bc.html

EPA asks oil producers to shut seven wastewater wells along Bird Creek spill area

By Kelly Bostian, 7/28/17

The Environmental Protection Agency has found the source of saltwater contamination in Bird Creek and is asking Osage County oil producers to cease wastewater injection at seven well sites.

Nearly a year after the Bird Creek saltwater contamination first was reported, EPA Region Six Administrator Sam Coleman said brine contamination in the drainage is a long-standing problem, has multiple sources, likely was most recently exacerbated by mechanical failures, may encompass a wider area than is presently known, and may lead to more frequent reporting requirements for producers.

Coleman said the Bird Creek situation simply runs counter to the agency's basic tenet.

"Our main goal, in very simple terms, is to make sure that anything injected stays in the formation in which it's injected," he said. "In this case there is direct communication with the surface, that surface being Bird Creek."

A fish kill and oily sheen on the northern tributary of Bird Creek, located on the Chapman Ranch in Osage County, was first reported to an oil spill hotline Aug. 14, 2016. Officials found extremely high salt levels and water temperatures near 100 degrees at the base of the water column.

After chemical testing and water monitoring in the creek began at 10 sites in late May, at least seven wells operating near the creek have been identified as problem wells, Coleman said. Correcting the issue will be handled in two parts.

"Part one is immediate action," he said. "We will work with the wells closest to Bird Creek where we have found the hot spots and ask them to voluntarily cease all injection."

The wells likely will be permanently capped, he said.

"Based on what evidence we have right now, we don't believe those wells can continue to inject," he said.

The producers have the option to refuse and go through an administrative process that involves a public hearing and an appeal process, but Coleman said that typically does not happen. He said it is EPA policy not to release the names of the producers.

"We've been very successful in working with operators. Once we explain the issue to folks, the operators want to do the right thing — the Osage Mineral Council, everyone wants to do the right thing for the environment," he said.

Examination of the spill area will continue after the wells are shut down.

"Part two is to look at a slightly larger area," he said. "There are still a couple of data points that give us concern that something else is happening, as well."

He said the EPA technical team will work with producers and Osage Nation officials to examine the larger area.

"It's not much larger, but larger, to see if there are other wells that are creating a problem," he said. "We don't have any specific evidence to speak of right now, but caution is the best approach."

All of the wells to be closed are relatively shallow, in the range of 2,700 feet to 2,900 feet deep, he said.

Saltwater issues in the drainage likely are long-term rather than recent, Coleman said. Examination of aerial photographs of the area show saltwater contamination along the creek dates back to 1937.

"We found a historic scar that we believe now is associated with a seep that has been there for a long time," he said. "It first shows up in 1937, and in researching photos it is there ever since."

The small creek, which winds through rolling prairie hills on the ranch, which shares a fence line with the Nature Conservancy's Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, is fed by multiple springs and small seeps.

It is possible that saltwater flowed up through seeps over the years and got washed away by heavy rains before being noticed, Coleman said.

"Very possibly there could have been intermittent issues," he said. "There is clearly a connection to the formation in that area."

Two recent mechanical failures reported to the EPA in required "mechanical integrity tests" likely exacerbated the problem recently and helped bring it to a head, Coleman said. In simple terms the tests show whether a well is holding its pressure or if it is leaking out.

One was discovered the month after the spill was reported, and another was reported in May, he said.

The EPA didn't immediately and publicly point to those wells as the problem because there are statutory requirements and the agency had no specific proof that those were the sole cause of the issue, Coleman said.

"In our business we have to have evidence, and we try to be very careful and deliberate," he said. "We can't draw conclusions we can't prove."

A producer with one of those two wells has already shut down that well of his own accord, Coleman said.

After months of testing in the creek and isolating well operations, the EPA team determined increased pressure from injection wells in the area had reached a sort of maximum capacity where all of the wells were contributing to the problem.

"Those mechanical failures became a sort of last straw," he said. "But in general the amount of water injected and the pressures created a situation where it was in constant contact with the surface," he said.

The effect of seismic activity in the area was considered but was discounted by cooperating experts with several agencies who are examining earthquake related issues with oil production across the state, including the Oklahoma Corporation Commission and the Oklahoma Geological Survey, he said.

"In this case they don't believe (earthquakes) were an issue," he said.

Beyond examining the issue in a broader area of Bird Creek, Coleman said the spill should not have a direct impact on other production sites but that more mechanical integrity testing may need to be enhanced.

"We are going to look at discussing in all our permits a requirement for more frequent testing of mechanical integrity," he said. "Right now it is not frequent enough to detect this kind of a problem."

When and if the injection wells are capped along Bird Creek, the pressures and geology should return to

normal and those connections to the surface should close and the creek will return to normal — pending further study of the surrounding area, Coleman said.

The Courier Times

http://www.thecouriertimes.com/news/article_063ebe35-9cf1-5230-a1d9-6fd9a464f9dd.html

EPA concludes industrial site clean up

By Victor Hamilton, 7/28/17

After three months on the job, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its clean up of debris from a former industrial site on S. 25th Street in New Castle.

The project, which started in April, involved removal of an estimated 6,000 tons of asbestos-contaminated material from the 9.3 acre property.

The site was the location of a Firestone brake pad manufacturing facility in the 1970s. Asbestos was commonly used in the manufacture of automotive products including clutches, gaskets, hood liners and brake pads until the late 1970s.

After the Firestone facility closed, Stealth Boat Corporation operated on the property as a boat repair and manufacturing facility from 2003 to 2007. Double Dabble Development operated there from 2007 to 2012.

In 2012, a fire broke out on the property which led to the factory being demolished. What remained was 22 piles of asbestos-contaminated rubble.

City officials attempted to secure the property by putting up gates and fencing; however, the large piles of debris often led to people cutting holes in the fence to sneak in as they looked for scrap metal and other materials that might hold some value.

“As soon as we would fix it there would be another hole,” said New Castle Mayor Greg York. “There would be a hole in about the amount of time it took to run home and grab a pair of pliers.”

The EPA kept the site wet while working there in order to keep dust and airborne particulates to a minimum. Crews transported debris from the site to a landfill in Portland, Indiana.

Wednesday, Anita Boseman, EPA’s on-scene coordinator for the clean up effort, met with New Castle Mayor Greg York in the parking lot of the newly cleared area to announce that the EPA’s effort was finished and return access to the site to the city.

“If it wasn’t for the EPA this wouldn’t have been possible,” York said. “The EPA lived up to everything they said they would do.”

The process was originally estimated to take roughly three months to complete, and the EPA budgeted \$1.3 million to complete it. The project was finished in three months and came in under cost at around \$1 million, Boseman said.

“It’s totally done. Now, they can come on and do whatever development they want to do,” Boseman added.

The EPA did not remove a large pile of old tires from the site. Those are the city's to deal with. The agency also did not remove any sub-surface contamination that may be present on the property. The New Castle Redevelopment Commission owns the property and it will be the RDC's responsibility to deal with anything below ground level that may need to be addressed.

The site is zoned for heavy industrial use and has a viable railroad line running through it. Mayor York said bringing a new factory to the location is high on his priority list and indicated efforts to market it to potential new tenants will be made.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-28/senate-blocks-gop-health-bill-jeopardizing-obamacare-repeal>

Obamacare Repeal Collapses as Senate GOP Blocks Health Bill

By Steven T. Dennis, Zachary Tracer, and Laura Litvan

A months-long effort by Senate Republicans to pass health legislation collapsed early Friday after GOP Senator John McCain joined two of his colleagues to block a stripped-down Obamacare repeal bill.

"I regret that our efforts were simply not enough, this time," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on the Senate floor after the vote. "This is clearly a disappointing moment."

"It's time to move on," he added after pulling the bill from the floor.

The decision by McCain to vote no came after weeks of brinkmanship and after his dramatic return from cancer treatment to cast the 50th vote to start debate on the bill earlier this week. The GOP's 'skinny' repeal bill was defeated 49-51, falling just short of the 50 votes needed to advance it. Republicans Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski also voted against it.

It wasn't immediately clear what the next steps would be for the Republicans. The repeal effort had appeared to collapse several times before, only to be revived. And several Republicans pleaded for their colleagues not to give up, even as President Donald Trump blasted the vote.

'Let ObamaCare Implode'

"3 Republicans and 48 Democrats let the American people down, As I said from the beginning, let ObamaCare implode, then deal. Watch!" he wrote on Twitter at 2:25 am Washington time.

Speaking on Fox News Friday morning, Republican National Committee Chairman Ronna Romney McDaniel said "it's a tough day for Republicans," while insisting party lawmakers will continue their drive to replace the Affordable Care Act.

"We campaigned on this for seven years," McDaniel said. The vast majority of congressional Republicans supported replacement legislation in votes this year, she said, adding that "we're not done."

But McConnell has struggled to find a compromise that satisfies conservatives, who have demanded a wholesale repeal of Obamacare, and moderates, who have been unnerved by predictions the bill would significantly boost the ranks of uninsured Americans.

Democrats immediately called for a bipartisan debate on how to fix Obamacare.

"We are not celebrating. We're relieved," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said after the vote. "Let's turn the page and work together to improve our health care system." He also said Democrats would be willing to help expedite bipartisan legislation and to advance Trump administration nominations.

Republicans have been under intense pressure to deliver on their repeal promises. But repeated pleas -- and threats -- from the White House and conservative groups weren't enough to push the bill through.

"I sadly feel a great many Americans will feel betrayed, that they were lied to, and that sentiment will not be unjustified. You cannot campaign against Obamacare and then vote for Obamacare," Republican Senator Ted Cruz said early Friday.

Loud Gasps

In a dramatic vote in the early morning hours on Friday, Collins voted no first, then Murkowski, followed by McCain, who came to the well of the Senate and gave a thumbs down, dooming the repeal bill to loud gasps, mostly from the Democratic side of the aisle. Republican leaders stood together looking grim as their back-up repeal plan appeared to collapse.

Of the three, Collins had been opposed to every GOP proposal on the table. Murkowski had also been critical of them, even after Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke called her and fellow Alaska Republican Senator Dan Sullivan and threatened them with retribution on major energy and public-lands decisions if they voted against repeal.

McCain was a bigger surprise. He has long called for repeal, but grew frustrated over the secretive process that GOP leaders employed to draft various repeal measures. When he returned this week, he made an impassioned speech on the Senate floor for bipartisanship, making it clear he was prepared to vote against the legislation if it didn't satisfy his concerns.

"We must now return to the correct way of legislating and send the bill back to committee, hold hearings, receive input from both sides of aisle, heed the recommendations of nation's governors, and produce a bill that finally delivers affordable health care for the American people," McCain said in a statement after the vote. "We must do the hard work our citizens expect of us and deserve."

Promises from Ryan

On Thursday evening, several Republicans were making the unusual argument that they would only vote to advance the measure if they got guarantees it wouldn't pass the House. House Speaker Paul Ryan assured several senators that his chamber would start a conference negotiation if the Senate passed the bill.

McConnell released the long-awaited text of his so-called skinny repeal bill late Thursday, only a few hours before the pivotal vote. It would end the requirement that individuals buy health insurance, and suspend through 2026 the requirement that companies provide it for their workers.

It would also extend a moratorium on the tax on medical-device makers through 2020 and increases the

amount that individuals can contribute to health-savings accounts. The measure would also defund Planned Parenthood for one year.

The Congressional Budget Office said late Thursday that the bill would result in an additional 15 million Americans without health insurance next year. It also said the measure would reduce the federal deficit by \$178.8 billion over a decade.

The defeat of the “skinny” repeal bill came after several other measures put forward by GOP leaders were also blocked.

The Senate rejected a fuller repeal of Obamacare 45-55 Wednesday. Seven Republicans voted against it, including Senate Health Chairman Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and McCain. Late Tuesday, a 43-57 Senate vote swept aside a revised version of McConnell’s Obamacare replacement, a measure negotiated in secret during weeks of tense GOP talks.

Republicans had said late Thursday their plan was to get the “skinny” bill through the Senate and then negotiate with the House on a broader agreement to repeal and replace Obamacare.

“Passing this legislation will allow us to work with our colleagues in the House toward a final bill that can go to the president, repeal Obamacare, and undo its damage,” McConnell said Thursday night on the Senate floor. “I urge everyone to support it.”

By early Friday morning, McConnell admitted defeat, saying his “only regret” is that they failed.

Toomey ‘Disappointed’

Several Senate Republicans said they hoped this wasn’t the end of the debate.

“I am disappointed with this setback on efforts to fix our broken health care system,” Republican Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said in a statement. “Congress must not give up on repealing and replacing the failed health care law.”

A crestfallen Bill Cassidy said he hopes Democrats are now interested in working on a broader deal, like the one he developed with Susan Collins.

“I’ve tried in the past, as has Susan, to have a dialogue. It hasn’t worked. Maybe this had to happen to begin to have a conversation,” the Louisiana Republican said.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/bad-news-if-you-make-150-000-to-300-000-higher-taxes-for-many-1501234200>

Bad News If You Make \$150,000 to \$300,000: Higher Taxes for Many

By Laura Saunders, 7/28/17

If President Donald Trump sticks to what he has said, Americans earning between \$149,400 and \$307,900 are most likely to see an increase in their taxes as a result of tax reform.

Those figures come from a recent study by the Tax Policy Center, a nonpartisan group in Washington, and are based on Mr. Trump's statements and proposals. The study concludes that nearly one-third of about 19 million households in that income range could see tax increases averaging from \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year.

By contrast, less than 10% of households earning the least or the most—below \$25,000 or above \$733,000—would owe more after a tax overhaul. Over all, the study found that about 20% of taxpayers would owe more after tax reform than before it.

The issue of tax reform's winners and losers has resurfaced after top congressional Republicans and the Trump administration released a set of broad principles for tax policy on Thursday containing few details.

But based on his proposals and statements, that is exactly what would happen.

It's important to note that the one-page tax proposal released by the White House in April omitted many important details. And the Big Six, a small group of Republican law- and policy makers now working on an overhaul plan, are meeting in secret.

A final deal, if any, could include many changes. But the Tax Policy's Center's estimates provide a useful marker in the interim.

"The broad conclusions are likely to be stable because they are based on the tax cuts Trump has promised," says Joe Rosenberg, an economist with the Tax Policy Center.

The study assumed a tax plan that loses revenue overall but has tax increases to stem losses. The provisions that would hurt revenue include changing individual income-tax rates to 10%, 25% and 35%; doubling the "standard deduction"; repealing the alternative minimum tax; reducing to 15% the tax rate on corporate income and business income of "pass-through" entities such as partnerships; and repealing the estate tax.

The provisions that would boost revenue include repealing "itemized" deductions other than for charitable giving and mortgage interest; repealing personal exemptions; repealing the head-of-household filing status; taxing payouts of large pass-through entities as dividends; and taxing capital gains at death above an exemption of \$5 million a person.

The effects of these changes aren't constant across income tiers, so the percentage of tax reform's net losers varies greatly among people with different incomes.

The affluent are at the greatest risk of owing more for several reasons. Compared with the working poor, they have more ability to pay higher taxes. Compared with the highest earners, they often derive a large chunk of their tax benefits from a host of deductions and exclusions that could be cut back.

The highest earners are more likely to reap additional benefits from favorable rates on investment income, such as long-term capital gains, than the affluent are. Unlike in the 1986 tax reform, which raised rates on capital gains, there are no current plans to do that this time. The highest earners also stand to gain greatly from provisions taxing business income at lower rates.

The Tax Policy Center didn't break out which changes would contribute most to tax increases for the affluent. But it's a good bet that a big one is eliminating deductions for state and local taxes. These write-offs currently cost Uncle Sam \$103 billion a year, far more than the mortgage-interest deductions at \$64 billion and charitable deductions at \$61 billion.

Loss of the state and local tax deduction could raise taxes for many even if the alternative minimum tax, or AMT, is repealed, according to a different study by Tax Policy Center economist Frank Sammartino.

This result might seem surprising because currently the AMT curtails the benefit of deducting state and local taxes for taxpayers who owe AMT. Because of complex interactions in the two provisions, however, about three-quarters of those who owe AMT and also deduct state and local taxes would see a net tax increase if both provisions are repealed.

In this case, the affluent taxpayers at risk of owing more after an overhaul are especially likely to live in high-tax states such as California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York.

With luck, we'll learn more about the actual plan soon—and see if the losers have changed.\

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/344226-intelligence-chairman-accuses-obama-aides-of-hundreds-of-unmasking>

By John Solomon, 7/27/17

The chairman of the House Intelligence Committee is accusing top political aides of President Obama of making hundreds of requests during the 2016 presidential race to unmask the names of Americans in intelligence reports, including Trump transition officials.

Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), in a letter to Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, said the requests were made without specific justifications on why the information was needed.

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"We have found evidence that current and former government officials had easy access to U.S. person information and that it is possible that they used this information to achieve partisan political purposes, including the selective, anonymous leaking of such information," Nunes wrote in the letter to Coats. The letter was provided to The Hill from a source in the intelligence community.

In March, Nunes disclosed that he had seen data suggesting Trump campaign and transition officials were having their names unmasked by departing officials in the Obama White House.

National Security Adviser Susan Rice and CIA Director John Brennan have acknowledged making such requests though they insisted the requests were for legitimate work reasons.

Nunes recused himself from his committee's work on its investigation over Russia's meddling in the 2016 campaign after a controversy over his charges about Obama-era unmasking.

The chairman had reviewed intelligence reports on White House grounds that he said showed unmasking of Trump officials by Obama aides. Democrats accused him of working with the White House to make the disclosures.

In Thursday's letter, Nunes said the total requests for Americans' names by Obama political aides numbered in the hundreds during Obama's last year in office and often lacked a specific intelligence community justification. He called the lack of proper justifications a "serious deficiency."

His letter noted requests from senior government officials, unlike career intelligence analysts, "made remarkably few individualized justifications for access" to the U.S. names.

"The committee has learned that one official, whose position had no apparent intelligence related function, made hundreds of unmasking requests during the final year of the Obama administration," Nunes wrote. "Of those requests, only one offered a justification that was not boilerplate."

Sources familiar with the Nunes letter identified the official as then-U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power.

Power did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Nunes also wrote that "Obama-era officials sought the identities of Trump transition officials within intelligence reports."

Nunes said he intends to introduce legislation to address concerns about the unmasking process impacting Americans' privacy.

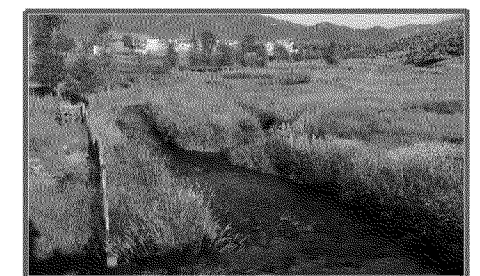
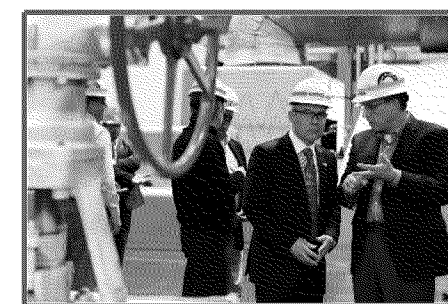
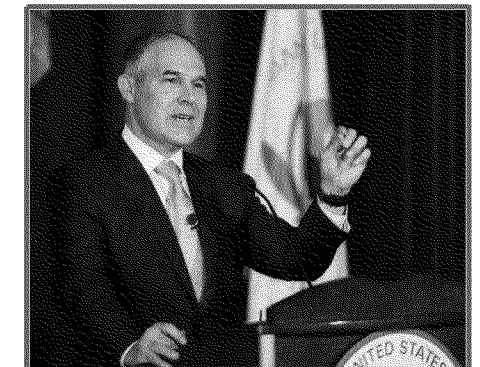
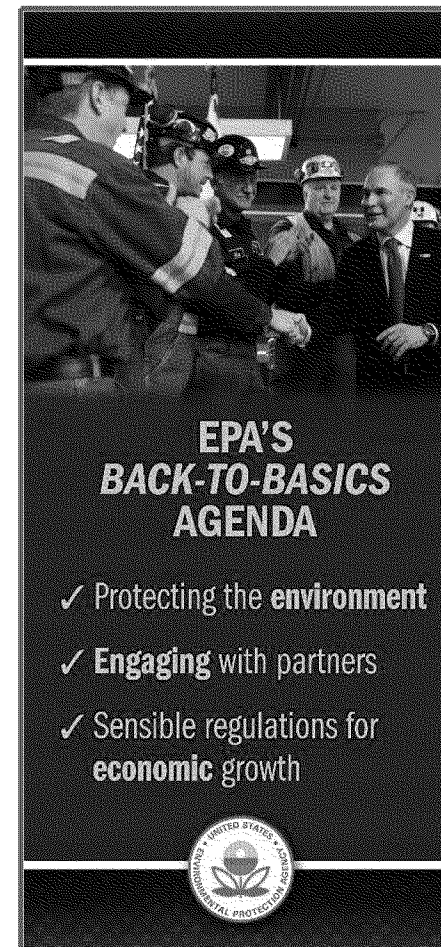
Ordinarily, Americans whose email or phone data or conversations are intercepted by the National Security Agency without a warrant overseas are legally required to have their names redacted or masked with descriptions like "U.S. person 1" to protect their identities in intelligence reports.

But beginning in 2011, Obama loosened the rules to make it easier for intelligence officials and his own political aides to request that the names be unmasked so they could better understand raw intelligence being gathered overseas.

The change has been criticized by liberal groups like the ACLU and conservatives like Nunes because of the privacy implications.



EPA Year in Review 2017-2018





E. SCOTT PRUITT
ADMINISTRATOR

Friends and Colleagues –

We have been hard at work enacting President Donald Trump's agenda during my first year as EPA Administrator. His courage and leadership have been key to our success. From his decision to exit the Paris Accord to his executive order empowering EPA to review and rescind the Clean Power Plan, the President is delivering on his promises and getting results for the American people.

We are following his lead. Days after being sworn in, I addressed EPA's employees and committed to listening and working cooperatively with states and stakeholders to tackle today's environmental challenges. In my first year, I traveled to 30 states and U.S. territories and met with 34 bipartisan governors and over 350 stakeholder groups. We are taking important actions in collaboration with – not opposition to – the states.

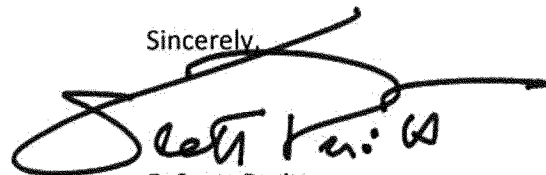
I committed to refocusing the Agency on its core mission. Today, we are focusing on cleaning up contaminated lands, improving air quality and rebuilding America's water infrastructure. Finally, I promised that we would restore the rule of law. We are rescinding and replacing the burdensome Waters of the U.S. rule, and we ended the harmful and wrongful practice of "sue and settle."

These are just a few examples of my commitment to fulfilling these promises. This report details EPA's accomplishments and what they mean for the American people and the environment. The sum of these actions is monumental: **In year one, EPA finalized 22 deregulatory actions, saving Americans more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs.**

We have made tremendous progress in year one to implement the President's vision. EPA today is more efficient, more effective and more transparent in carrying out its all-important task of protecting human health and the environment. Much work remains to be done though. We will help repair our nation's crumbling water infrastructure; we will continue to clean up and revitalize more Superfund sites; and we will work with states to continue to improve air quality. Thanks to our reforms and improvements in year one, we now have the framework and policies in place to tackle these problems head on.

I look forward to working together to accomplish even more progress in 2018.

Sincerely,



E. Scott Pruitt



EPA Year in Review 2017-2018



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His continued attention is appreciated. This should be the standard at all sites where residents are exposed to hazardous contamination.” (05/31/17)

WOTUS

Michael Turner, president, Dallas Builders Association: “The Dallas Builders Association commends EPA Administrator Pruitt for holding this roundtable in Dallas to get direct feedback from home builders and developers who are affected by burdensome regulations that raise the cost of housing and harm small businesses. The nation’s home builders support the administrator’s efforts to enact a revised waters of the U.S. rule that will protect the environment without adding unnecessary regulatory burdens that will hurt housing and other industries in Texas that rely on a predictable permitting process.” (08/10/17)

Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee: "The federal government works for the people of Iowa and the rest of the United States. Administrator Pruitt is right to come to Iowa and hear firsthand how the WOTUS rule and other regulations affect the farmers on the ground who are good stewards of the land while feeding the world." (08/08/17)

Leslie Rutledge, Attorney General, Ark.: “Administrator Pruitt's decision last month to completely re-evaluate the WOTUS rule, minimizing the regulatory burden on countless landowners, demonstrates his commitment to building stronger relationships with state partners.” (07/20/17)

to partnering with EPA to improve its processes and benefits.” (10/03/17)

Sue and Settle

Tom Donohue, president and chief executive officer, U.S. Chamber of Commerce: “The U.S. Chamber of Commerce applauded Administrator Pruitt’s announcement that he would end the so-called sue and settle scheme, which allowed special interest groups to sue EPA in an attempt to force it to take action on their pet issues.” (11/13/17)

American Farm Bureau Federation: “In fulfilling his promise to end the practice of regulation through litigation that has harmed the American public, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued an Agency-wide directive designed to end ‘sue and settle’ practice with the Agency, providing an unprecedented level of public participation and transparency in EPA consent decrees and settlement agreements.” (10/16/17)

Richard Guebort, Jr., president, Illinois Farm Bureau: “We’re pleased to see the U.S. EPA move away from the previous administration’s closed-door dealings which directed agency policy and into a more transparent form of revisions and rule-making. We would like to thank EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to increase transparency in the regulatory process and helping ensure that all stakeholders have a voice when new environmental rules are developed.”(10/16/17)

Steve Milloy, senior policy fellow, Energy and Environmental Legal Institute: “By ending the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) ‘Sue and Settle’ practice as well as improving transparency in consent decrees and settlement agreements, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is following through on President Trump’s promise to ‘drain the swamp.’” (10/16/17)

William Yeatman, senior fellow, Competitive Enterprise Institute: “We agree with Administrator Pruitt’s goal of ensuring that the agency—and not special interests—establish federal policymaking priorities.” (10/16/17)

Superfund

Governor Brian Sandoval (R-Nev.): “The State of Nevada has secured a path forward to restore and reclaim the full Anaconda mine site on a predictable and transparent timeline. It was an honor to host Administrator Scott Pruitt in Weed Heights for this special announcement. This is a landmark day for those who have worked to accomplish a path toward achieving our shared goal of cleaning up the mine site and I am grateful for the trust of the EPA to defer management of the process to Nevada and the incredible partnership with Atlantic Richfield Company.” (02/09/18)

Dawn Chapman, co-founder, Just Moms St. Louis: “We consider 70-plus percent removal of the waste [at the West Lake Landfill] a victory and step in the right direction. Our goals, along with relocating the residents, have always been getting the radioactive waste out of the Missouri River floodplain and away from the threat of the underground fire.” (02/01/18)

Congresswoman Ann Wagner (R-Mo.): “After years of broken promises and inaction by previous administrations, Administrator Pruitt and the EPA are proposing a viable, permanent solution for cleaning up the West Lake Landfill. I commend them for delivering on this promise to our community and prioritizing Missourians who have lived in fear and uncertainty for too long.” (02/01/18)

Maritza Lopez, East Chicago resident: “Administrator Pruitt recognized that the USS Lead Superfund site was important enough to serve as the first Superfund site that he visited.

Accomplishments

- ✓ Halted Job-Killing, Burdensome, Duplicative Regulations
- ✓ Eliminated Agency Backlogs, Improved Efficiency
- ✓ Increased Transparency, Accountability
- ✓ Returned to Cooperative Federalism
- ✓ Restored the Rule of Law, Process
- ✓ Improved Compliance and Assistance

In one year, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt spearheaded 22 deregulatory actions that could save the American people more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs.

By the Numbers:

- ✓ IMPLEMENTING EXECUTIVE ORDERS (E.O.): EPA quickly acted on President Donald Trump’s E.O. to review the 2015 definition of “Waters of the U.S.,” President Trump’s Energy Independence E.O. to propose a repeal of the so-called “Clean Power Plan,” and President Trump’s “Regulatory Reform” E.O. 13777 by finalizing two deregulatory actions for each regulatory action – with ZERO net costs to the U.S. economy.
- ✓ REGULATORY REFORM: 22 deregulatory actions were finalized, which could save more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs; EPA also initiated work on an additional 44 deregulatory actions and announced the reconsideration of over a dozen overreaching and burdensome regulations.
- ✓ OUTREACH: Administrator Pruitt consulted with 95 bipartisan members of Congress, 34 bipartisan governors, visited 30 states and U.S. territories, and met with over 350 stakeholder groups.
- ✓ AIR: EPA acted on 322 State Implementation Plans (SIPs) and turned one Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) into a SIP each month since March 1, 2017.
- ✓ WATER: 3,000 Total Maximum Daily Loads were approved and EPA focused on the priority water bodies selected by states. EPA also: cut the amount of time it took to review state water quality standards in half (from 120 days to 60); committed \$25 million in water infrastructure loans; disbursed \$8.9 billion in State Revolving Funds to improve our nation’s water quality; and awarded \$100 million to Flint, Michigan for water infrastructure upgrades.
- ✓ LAND: Seven contaminated sites were eliminated, substantially or entirely, from the National Priorities List (NPL) of contaminated sites; only two sites were removed the previous year. EPA also awarded \$60 million in Brownfields cleanup grants to local communities.
- ✓ CHEMICALS: 600 new chemical submissions were stuck in the Agency’s backlog as of January 2017; EPA cleared the backlog and ensured that all new chemicals coming to market received a safety determination within about 90 days.
- ✓ ENFORCEMENT: In FY17, \$1.6 billion was collected in administrative and civil judicial penalties, higher than any of the previous ten years, other than FY16, which included one \$5.7 billion action taken. EPA also celebrated an increase in the value of commitments by private parties to clean up land to more than \$1.2 billion, an increase in the total of criminal fines, restitution and mitigation to \$2.98 billion, and an increase in the value of actions to improve compliance to nearly \$20 billion.

Introduction

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plays a vital role in American society. It is a role that is clearly defined by Congress, its statutes, and – from time to time – the courts. EPA most-effectively protects the environment and human health when it operates within the bounds of its authority. However, when EPA strays outside that role, it encumbers both environmental protections and economic growth.

At the outset of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt’s tenure, he set forth a “back-to-basics agenda” centered on returning EPA to its proper role via three objectives:

- 1) Refocusing the Agency back to its core mission
- 2) Restoring power to the states through cooperative federalism
- 3) Adhering to the rule of law and improving Agency processes

In one year, EPA has made tremendous environmental progress in line with these goals, and it shows that the Agency can be both pro-environment and pro-growth.

The combination of a refocused Agency, cooperative federalism, and rule of law has unleashed new optimism throughout the nation. Americans can trust that environmental hazards will be addressed quickly and thoroughly; states and industry will be treated as partners, not opponents; and regulations will provide clarity, not confusion. The results are a cleaner, safer, and stronger America for all.

Core Mission

The first of the three pillars of Administrator Pruitt’s “back-to-basics agenda” is to refocus the Agency on its core mission: clean air, land,

and water. EPA was founded in 1970 in order to consolidate the federal government’s environmental efforts under one roof and better enforce the environmental laws passed by Congress. In recent years, however, EPA expanded its authority and jurisdiction into areas outside its core mission. In the process, central responsibilities of the Agency took a backseat to ideological crusades, allowing some environmental threats – like cleaning up toxic land – to go unaddressed. Administrator Pruitt returned the Agency to its core mission and prioritized issues at the heart of EPA’s purpose: ensuring access to clean air and water, cleaning up contaminated lands and returning them to communities for reuse, improving water infrastructure, and ensuring chemicals entering the marketplace are reviewed for safety. In just one year, EPA made immense progress on these fronts, and the American people have seen real, tangible results.



Regulatory Reform

Barry Hart, executive vice president and chief executive officer, Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives “We are encouraged to see that the Trump Administration understands the concerns of people in rural America and is committed to bringing the change they want. We look forward to working with Administrator Pruitt and other administration officials as they work to ensure Washington regulations don’t harm the people who can least afford it — our members — and help rural communities create jobs.” (04/20/17)

Mike Jackson, chief executive officer, Auto Nation: The Trump Administration is “absolutely doing the right thing” when it comes to rolling back environmental regulations from the Obama Administration. (02/16/17)

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), U.S. Senate Majority Leader: “I applaud Administrator Scott Pruitt for his decision to delay this Obama Administration issued regulation. [The 2015 Ozone Standards were] yet another attack on the Middle Class by the Obama Administration and was forced through despite significant concern from communities across the country. Today’s postponement will give states and municipalities relief in the interim while EPA continues to review NAAQS levels.” (06/06/17)

Scientific Advisory Board Reforms

Howard Feldman, senior director for regulatory and scientific affairs, American Petroleum Institute: “Smart, science-based regulations are essential to our nation meeting its energy and environmental needs well into the future. Administrator Pruitt’s actions today advance the administration’s commitment to promoting American energy production, transportation, refining, and use while protecting the environment.” (10/31/17)

Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), senior member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: “Administrator Pruitt’s directive to increase transparency and impartiality at the EPA is welcome news. . .The reforms implemented today will restore integrity to the science advisory boards and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that diverse voices are heard from the scientific community and increasing participation from state, local and tribal governments.” (10/31/17)

Congressman Lamar Smith (R- Tex.), chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Science, Space, and Technology Committee: “Today’s announcement shows that we have an administrator with common sense, commitment and courage. Administrator Pruitt is restoring the EPA advisory boards to their original purpose – to provide the administrator objective advice on science and technology policies.” (10/31/17)

Smart Sectors

Michael D. Bellaman, president and chief executive officer, Associated Builders and Contractors: “The Smart Sectors Program shows it’s a new day at EPA—and that’s good news for the environment and the economy. The nation’s construction industry welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with regulators to ensure that environmental protection is streamlined and cost effective. That’s the way government can help industry be more productive, create more jobs and grow the economy.” (10/03/17)

John McKnight, senior vice president of government relations, National Marine Manufacturers Association: “We are thrilled to be part of the EPA’s launch of its Smart Sectors Program and are proud to represent an industry that’s always first in line when it comes

speed with which we have worked on this project.” (01/12/18)

Governor Greg Abbott, (R-Texas): “Both the EPA and the state are working closely and collaboratively [to monitor the Texas sites and make sure the public health is not imperiled].” (09/05/17)

Bob Dinneen, president and chief executive officer, Renewable Fuels Association: “The RFA applauds the EPA’s decision to waive certain fuel regulations for 12 states and D.C. due to the fuel supply emergency caused by Hurricane Harvey. We believe the waiver has the potential to provide much-needed relief to consumers in these areas facing gasoline supply shortages and price spikes.” (08/10/17)

Forestry

Bob Cleaves, president and chief executive officer, Biomass Power Association: “The biomass industry greatly appreciates Administrator Pruitt’s strong commitment to create regulatory certainty for biomass power producers and all contributors to the wood supply chain.” (02/14/18)

Jason Stock, executive director, New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association: “The New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association is pleased Administrator Pruitt took the time to come to New Hampshire to meet with timberland owners, and members of the forest products industry. As the second most forested state in the nation, New Hampshire’s forests are an important part of our heritage, culture, and economy. Having a regulatory environment that promotes the growing, management and processing of timber will ensure this legacy continues.” (02/14/18)

Fuel Economy Standards

Mitch Bainwol, president and chief executive officer, The Auto Alliance: “With this

announcement, the Administration is fulfilling its commitment to reinstate the midterm evaluation of future vehicle fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards. This review is important to consumers nationwide who want government to rely on the facts to drive improvements in fuel economy. We’re delighted to see the two federal agencies align and coordinate their programs, and we thank Secretary Chao and Administrator Pruitt for working closely together to harmonize a review driven by the most current data, consumer preferences and marketplace realities. (8/10/17)

Peter Welch, president and chief executive officer, National Automobile Dealers Association: “NADA applauds the Trump Administration for reaffirming our shared commitment to a transparent, fair and data-driven midterm review of fuel-economy standards.” (03/15/17)

International Cooperation

Gian Luca Galletti, Italian Minister of the Environment: “The protection of the environment and public health is a common goal for Italy and the United States. There are many themes that see our common commitment. The presence of Administrator Pruitt at the G7 Environment in Bologna has been a very important element that allowed us to start constructive dialogue on all environmental issues as well as to open new channels of business cooperation between our two countries.” (06/11/17)

Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan, Canada: “I was grateful for the chance to meet with Administrator Pruitt. Canada and the U.S. can work together on a continental approach to energy and the environment that focuses on technological innovation like CCS and clean coal initiatives without tax and regulatory policies that cost jobs.” (04/04/17)

AIR: Improve Air Quality

Clean Power Plan

The Clean Power Plan (CPP) appears to have far exceeded the Agency’s statutory authority, while imposing massive regulatory burdens on affordable energy for hardworking American families. The U.S. Supreme Court issued an unprecedented stay of the rule in 2016. After calls for a review in President Trump’s Energy Independence Executive Order, Administrator Pruitt proposed a repeal of the CPP on October 10, 2017. EPA’s proposed action on CPP is estimated to save the U.S. economy up to \$33 billion in avoided compliance costs.

As part of the ongoing repeal process, the Agency heard directly from stakeholders and citizens most impacted by the rule, including a listening session in Charleston, West Virginia – the heart of coal country. Three additional listening sessions took place in Kansas City, Missouri; San Francisco, California; and Gillette, Wyoming.

“Consistent with our commitment to the rule of law, we’ve already set in motion an assessment of the previous administration’s questionable legal basis in our proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan. With a clean slate, we can now move forward to provide regulatory certainty. It ensures adequate and early opportunity for public comment from all stakeholders about next steps the Agency might take to limit greenhouse gases from stationary sources, in a way that properly stays within the law, and the bounds of the authority provided to EPA by Congress.”

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

In a separate but related action, EPA issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to solicit information from the public about a potential new rule regulating greenhouse gas emissions from power plants consistent with the Clean Air Act and proper relations between EPA and the states.

Ozone

EPA is committed to prioritizing air quality improvements and partnering with states to ensure more Americans are living and working in areas that meet our nation’s stringent air quality standards. Under current measurements, roughly 40 percent of the nation fails to meet attainment standards set under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Under Administrator Pruitt’s leadership, EPA is working with states to develop air quality plans and address underlying technical issues. In November 2017, consistent with Administrator Pruitt’s pledge to be more responsive to local needs, EPA found that more than 2,600 counties – roughly 85 percent of the U.S. – met the stringent 2015 NAAQS for ground-level ozone. The Agency is now working to finalize designations for the remaining areas. Administrator Pruitt also established an Ozone Cooperative Compliance Task Force to develop additional flexibilities for states to comply with ozone standards.

State Implementation Plans

Rather than work cooperatively with states to implement clean air programs, President Obama’s EPA imposed more than 50 FIPs – the equivalent of a top-down mandate – on states. EPA recognizes that states have an enormous role to play in environmental protection and the Agency can improve outcomes through collaboration, not federal dictates. Under Pruitt’s leadership, EPA has turned an average of one FIP into a SIP every month. Since March 2017, EPA has worked with states to approve more than 200 SIPs. Under its FY18 – FY19

Agency Priority Goals, EPA, in close collaboration with states, will reduce the number of nonattainment areas by nearly 20 percent.

- During the Obama Administration, more than 50 FIPs were imposed on states, including nearly 20 under the Regional Haze program.
- Under the Trump Administration, with EPA Administrator Pruitt's leadership, EPA has turned at least one FIP into a SIP approximately every month.

Renewable Fuel Standard

As directed by the Clean Air Act, EPA finalized volume requirements for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) maintaining renewable fuel volumes at levels comparable to the 2017 standards, recognizing limits to the growth of cellulosic and advanced biofuels, and understanding both market realities and consumer demand. Finalizing these volumes consistent with the statutory timeline helped stabilize the renewable fuels program and provide regulatory certainty.

Permitting Reform for New Source Review

Consistent with President Trump's priorities and under Administrator Pruitt's direction, EPA is taking steps to clarify, revise, and streamline preconstruction requirements under the New Source Review (NSR) permitting program. EPA's permitting requirements will no longer stifle a company's ability to invest in the latest and greatest technologies or make continued improvements to their operations. On December 7, 2017, EPA took an important step to achieving this goal by issuing a guidance

memorandum. The memo makes clear that, under current NSR regulations, the Agency is not to "second guess" an owner or operator's analysis, as long as it is done in a manner consistent with NRS requirements. It further clarified that the true environmental impacts of the project – via post-construction actual emissions data – will guide enforcement actions.

"Once In Always In" Is Out

In a 1995 memo, EPA established a "once in always in" policy that required any facility subject to major source standards for hazardous air pollutants to always remain subject to those standards, even if production processes changed or controls were implemented that eliminated or permanently reduced that facility's potential to emit hazardous air pollutants. This policy served as a disincentive for efforts to improve air quality and was also inconsistent with the Clean Air Act.

"This guidance is based on a plain language reading of the statute that is in line with EPA's guidance for other provisions of the Clean Air Act. It will reduce regulatory burden for industries and the states, while continuing to ensure stringent and effective controls on hazardous air pollutants."

**- EPA's Office of Air and Radiation
Assistant Administrator Bill Wehrum**

EPA issued a guidance memorandum in January 2018 withdrawing the "once in always in" policy. The memo from EPA's Office of Air and Radiation Assistant Administrator Bill Wehrum finds that EPA had no statutory authority under the Clean Air Act to place a time limit on when a facility may be determined to be an area source. Under the Clean Air Act, facilities can be reclassified as "area" (minor) sources once their potential to

Jim Matheson, chief executive officer, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association: "Affordable and reliable power is fundamental to a successful economy. We appreciate the Trump administration working to protect American families and businesses from the potentially devastating impacts of the Clean Power Plan." (03/28/17)

Cooperative Federalism

Amanda Bowen, executive director, Manufacturers Association of Florida: "The Manufacturers Association of Florida commends EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's laser focus on ensuring the protection and conservation of Florida's unique natural resources and ecosystems, while also maintaining sustainable and economically productive communities." (02/05/18)

John L. Hoblick, president, Florida Farm Bureau: "I applaud Administrator Pruitt's visit to Florida and his willingness to listen to the concerns of our growers. These concerns often stem from an oppressive regulatory environment, and the EPA has taken encouraging steps to curb federal overreach, such as rescinding the 2015 'Waters of the United States' rule." (02/05/18)

Brian Kraft, owner, Alaska Sportsman's Lodge: "This is an encouraging step for many Alaskan businesses and families that depend on Bristol Bay salmon. The EPA made the right decision by listening to local people, dozens of Alaskan business owners, and sportsmen and women around the country." (01/26/18)

Chris Blankenship, commissioner, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: "The State of Alabama welcomes EPA as the new Chairperson of the RESTORE Council. Alabama strongly supports the collaborative nature of the RESTORE Council between the five Gulf States and our federal

partners which is so foundational to restoration of the Alabama coast resulting from the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, as well as the cumulative effects of hurricanes on the sustainability of our important coastal resources and the people that rely on them." (12/06/17)

Mark Haney, president, Kentucky Farm Bureau: "We appreciate the EPA Administrator visiting our annual meeting to listen to farmers about their conservation efforts and concerns related to their operations. Administrator Pruitt, a fellow Kentuckian, knows the hard work our farmers put in on a daily basis to keep our farms financially and environmentally sustainable." (11/30/17)

Governor Phil Bryant, (R-Miss.): "Mississippi farmers are the original conservationists. I am grateful for Administrator Pruitt's commitment to working with us to develop strategies that will strengthen agriculture in Mississippi while protecting our environment." (10/12/17)

Evaristo Cruz, chairman, National Tribal Caucus: "The 1984 EPA Indian Policy is a critical instrument that provides both the EPA and Native American tribes with principles that illustrate the federal trust relationship. On behalf of the National Tribal Caucus we would like to thank Administrator Pruitt for upholding and honoring this legacy that EPA has instituted." (10/11/17)

Disaster Relief

Julia M. Nazario Fuentes, Mayor of Loíza: "This work in conjunction with the EPA is a great example of how our administration is building partnerships with federal, state and nonprofit organizations. It is important that our citizens follow the instructions provided by the EPA and our Recycling Office, so that we can keep Loíza clean. Our thanks to the EPA staff for the

period of time to accelerate new chemical reviews, providing American manufacturers with new and safe materials that will help drive innovation and manufacturing growth.” (06/05/17)

The California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association: “EPA’s denial of [the petition to ban chlorpyrifos] is based off of the foundation in which EPA was created on, relying on sound-science and a transparent process. EPA will now direct its efforts to updating and revising its human health assessment for chlorpyrifos under the standard procedures of the ongoing registration review process, scheduled for completion on October 1, 2022. This is great news for producers and shows the EPA’s redirection towards supporting a scientific process!” (03/30/17)

Clean Power Plan

Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: “The Trump administration is listening to the people of Wyoming. Today’s announcement that the EPA will hold a listening session in Gillette, on the impacts of the so-called ‘Clean Power Plan,’ demonstrates the administration’s commitment to hear directly from the people who would have been hurt most by this punishing regulation. The Clean Power Plan would have meant lost jobs for energy workers in Gillette and across Wyoming. I am thankful to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for his leadership on this important issue.” (12/06/17)

Paul Bailey, president and chief executive officer, The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity: “The Clean Power Plan is the poster child for bad regulation. It is illegal, expensive, and ineffective, and we commend Administrator Pruitt for repealing it.” (10/10/17)

Congressman Paul A. Gosar (R-Ariz.), chairman, Congressional Western Caucus: “The so-called ‘Clean Power Plan’ picked winners and losers at the expense of American job creators. I applaud Administrator and the Trump Administration for acting to rollback the unconstitutional and fundamentally-flawed Obama mandate.” (10/10/17)

Jay Timmons, president and chief executive officer, National Association of Manufacturers: “Manufacturing workers can feel a tremendous sense of relief today. The Trump administration has made the right decision and ended a policy that threatened manufacturers’ access to affordable, reliable energy and did not even adhere to existing law.” (10/10/17)

Chrissy Harbin, vice president of external affairs, Americans for Prosperity: “This is a welcome departure from the Washington-first, Americans-last approach that characterized energy and environmental policy under the previous administration. The Clean Power Plan (CPP) was an overreach of executive power... It’s great to see President Trump and EPA Administrator Pruitt rein in this sweeping mandate.” (10/09/17)

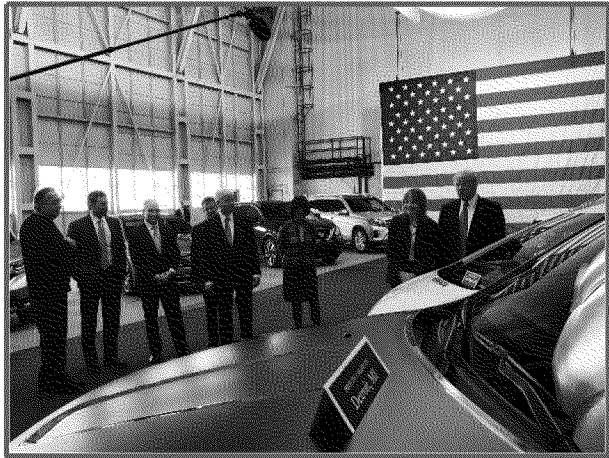
Hal Quinn, president and chief executive officer, National Mining Association: “Administrator Pruitt will signal a decisive break with past policies that have used regulation of doubtful legality to circumvent the will of Congress, usurp States’ authority and raise costs on American consumers. Repealing this Obama-era rule would close a chapter of regulatory overreach that set standards without regard to the steep costs or availability of technology necessary to meet them. The Clean Power Plan represented an unlawful attempt to transform the nation’s power grid.” (10/06/17)

emit hazardous air pollutants falls below the levels that define major sources. This action represents another major step by EPA to reduce burdens that deterred a core mission: improving air quality.

National Program for Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Fuel Economy Standards

EPA has taken multiple steps over the past year to review the regulatory overreach of the previous administration in the transportation sector.

Alongside U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Elaine Chao, Administrator Pruitt announced the agencies’ intentions to reestablish the original timeline for public input for the Midterm Evaluation (MTE). This process is a key to assessing the appropriateness of the previous administration’s standards for greenhouse gases and fuel economy for light-duty vehicles for Model Years 2022-2025. Under Administrator Pruitt’s leadership, forward-looking actions will ensure that the program is beneficial for both consumers and the environment.



Administrator Pruitt traveled to Ypsilanti, Mich. with DOT Secretary Chao and President Trump to discuss CAFE standards.

EPA also reviewed, and then issued, a proposal to undo the regulatory overreach of the Phase II Fuel Efficiency Standards for medium- and

heavy-duty trucks as applied to the glider industry. Gliders are a specially manufactured type of heavy-duty highway vehicle. Proposing to repeal this provision is a direct result of Administrator Pruitt’s commitment to regulate consistent with the rule of law as the previous administration’s rule for gliders did not comply with the Clean Air Act.

Carbon Neutrality for Biomass

As directed by Congress and in conjunction with President Trump’s Executive Order “Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth,” a multi-agency effort has been initiated between EPA, the U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a mechanism for federal cooperation and consistency on the use of biomass. EPA is working to develop a range of options in accordance with a carbon-neutral policy for biomass from forests and other lands and sectors as part of its ongoing review of the Clean Air Act permitting programs. Incorporating these sources into an “all of the above” energy portfolio will ensure biomass plays a key role in addressing the energy needs of the U.S. in an economically and environmentally beneficial way.

“For years, the federal government rendered most U.S. forestry producers ineligible for federal procurement projects and created confusion around biomass carbon neutrality. EPA is focused on clarifying regulations that were encumbering the industry.”

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

WATER: Provide for Clean and Safe Water

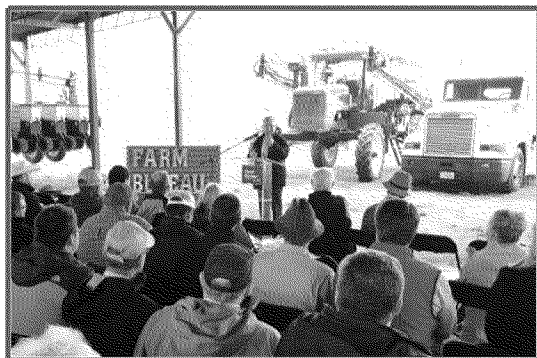
Waters of the United States (WOTUS)

On February 28, 2017, President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order directing EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) to review this issue. Within a few months, the agencies proposed a rule to rescind the 2015 “Waters of the United States” rule to provide regulatory certainty to American farmers, landowners, and businesses, and put an end to one-size-fits-all regulations from Washington.

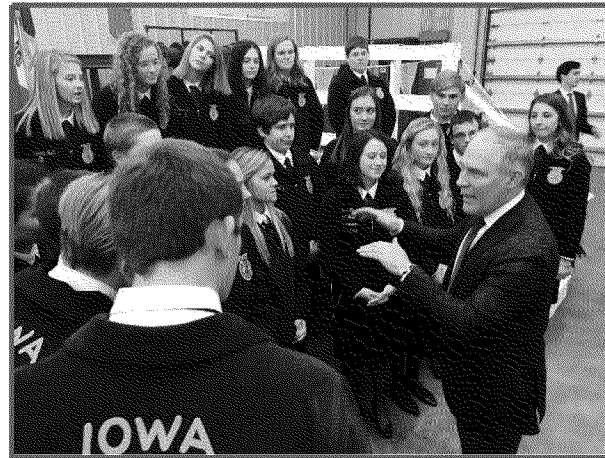
“We are taking significant action to return power to the states and provide regulatory certainty to our nation's farmers and businesses. This is the first step in the two-step process to redefine 'Waters of the U.S.' and we are committed to moving through this re-evaluation to quickly provide regulatory certainty, in a way that is thoughtful, transparent, and collaborative with other agencies and the public.”

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

In the interim, EPA and the Army Corps finalized a rule to postpone the applicability date of the 2015 WOTUS rule until February 6, 2020. This postponement provides regulatory certainty, will allow EPA to reevaluate the 2015 rule, and ensure the status quo is maintained until that process is complete.



Administrator Pruitt addresses members of the Tennessee Farm Bureau in Franklin, Tenn.



Administrator Pruitt talks with members of Nevada, Iowa Future Farmers of America.

Water Infrastructure

Our nation's water infrastructure is in dire need of repair. Roughly 700 water main breaks occur across the U.S. every day – over 200,000 annually. Not surprisingly, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave our nation's drinking water, wastewater, and hazardous waste infrastructure a "D" grade.

Then there's the problem of lead in our drinking water. EPA has taken important steps to support the State of Michigan in Flint's recovery and improve water infrastructure across the nation.

Flint, Michigan

In March 2017, EPA awarded a \$100 million grant to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to accelerate and expand its work to replace lead service lines and make other critical infrastructure improvements. Later in the year, EPA completed a periodic review of Michigan's drinking water program and released a report identifying key steps the state should take to ensure they are providing safe and clean drinking water.

In addition, EPA concurred with Michigan's plans to forgive Flint's past drinking water debt. Over the past year, EPA has worked in

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Air

Senator Tom Cotton, (R-Ark.): “It's decisions like this one that are slowly but surely rebuilding trust between rural America and the EPA. I'm glad to see the EPA focus on concrete problems, like haze and other forms of pollution, and also show respect for our state officials' authority. It's a much-needed corrective to the heavy-handed ways of the previous administration, and I look forward to our state developing its own implementation plan, working in cooperation with—not under the thumb of—the EPA.” (01/29/18)

Becky Keogh, director, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality: “Today we are pleased to accept an EPA grant to drive further innovative, cost-effective solutions and continuous improvement in Arkansas's air, which is critical for healthy communities and economic progress. Through cooperative efforts, Arkansas's state of air quality is one of the best in the nation—achieving all national air quality standards. Our progress is most effectively achieved through actions and support from local, state, and federal partners.” (01/29/18)

Todd Sax, head, California Air Resources Board Enforcement Division: “California Air Resources Board rules are designed to protect public health by ensuring all Californians breathe clean air. We appreciate our partners at U.S. EPA who are helping to achieve federal air quality standards throughout the State.” (11/29/17)

Denise Koch, director, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Air Quality: “We are encouraged by the Borough's efforts to work with the community to reduce emissions and appreciate EPA's approval of the

moderate area plan. This will enable us to focus our efforts on developing the serious area plan and improving air quality in the area. The improved local ordinance, long running changeout program to provide funding to upgrade wood stoves and hydronic heaters to cleaner heating appliances, and the annual Fairbanks Clear the Air Forum and Expo are providing the local community with the information and tools needed to solve the air quality problem locally.” (08/29/17)

Bryan Shaw, Ph.D., chairman, Texas Commission of Environmental Quality: “We are pleased with the improvement in air quality, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will continue to monitor during on-going remediation activities to make sure compliance with federal standards continues.” (06/29/17)

Chemicals and Pesticides

Angela Logomasini, Ph.D., senior fellow, Competitive Enterprise Institute: “Pruitt's action [to deny chlorpyrifos ban] sets an important pro-science approach to regulation that the agency should continue to follow.” (08/10/17)

Cal Dooley, president and chief executive officer, American Chemistry Council: “We commend Administrator Pruitt for his attention to improving the efficiency of new chemical review under an amended TSCA. U.S. businesses, jobs, and competitiveness depend on a functioning new chemicals program. In just the last month, significant progress has been made to relieve the backlog, and we welcome the Administrator's commitment to have the program functioning smoothly again by the end of July.” (06/05/17)

Mike Witt, corporate director of health and environmental research, Dow Chemical: “Administrator Pruitt and his team at the EPA have made great progress over a very short

Minneapolis Star Tribune: Pruitt Signals Welcome Support for Great Lakes Restoration Project. “Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Scott Pruitt’s visit to Minnesota last week yielded an unexpected boon for those who care about clean water. In an interview with a Star Tribune reporter, Pruitt affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior.” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star-Tribune: Pruitt is working hard to protect the Great Lakes. “Scott Pruitt, the nation’s top environmental officer, said Wednesday he endorses continued federal funding for a landmark cleanup of the Great Lakes... It’s a continuing need, and we have to see that it’s adequately funded.” (07/20/17)



Twin Cities WCCO-TV: Pruitt gave an in-depth interview about the EPA’s Back-To-Basics Agenda. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was in studio for an exclusive interview while he was in the state to meet with Gov. Mark Dayton. He’s in Minnesota as part of his Back-To-Basics tour and talked about rolling back regulations.” (07/19/17)

Deseret News: Pruitt visited Utah and talked about WOTUS. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Utah as part of multistate tour to get input on how the agency can be more responsive to states’ needs in general and in specific how the controversial Waters of the

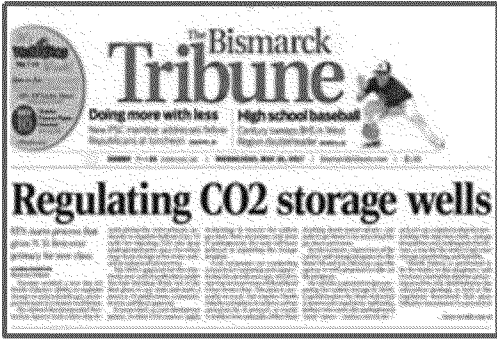
United States rule should be retooled.” (07/18/17)

Salt Lake City KTVX-TV: Pruitt discusses his Back-To-Basics agenda. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt made his first stop on the State Action Tour here in Utah. This morning he sat down with Glen Mills on Good Morning Utah exclusively to talk about the tour.” (07/18/17)

Tulsa World: EPA Chief Scott Pruitt says he’s ‘determined to prioritize Superfund cleanups.’ “‘It’s important that we address state and tribal rights when protecting the environment and natural resources,’ Pruitt said upon announcement of a new grant awarded the Quapaw Tribe.” (05/31/17)

Tulsa World: EPA’s Pruitt: Agency is ‘doing what it’s supposed to do’ at Osage pollution site. ““This is just leadership,” Pruitt said. “It’s our agency doing what it’s supposed to do, coming in, finding out what the source of the problem is, getting it corrected.” (05/28/17)

Minot Daily News: Governor Burgum says Pruitt is good for North Dakota. “Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota. Pruitt, an attorney, is a Republican politician from Oklahoma. He has been a leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda, including suing the EPA to block its Clean Power Plan and Waters of the United States rule.” (05/01/17)



partnership with the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to ensure that water quality continues to improve. This partnership has produced one of the most robust drinking water data sets in the country. EPA remains committed to working closely with the State of Michigan, Flint and local partners to protect public health and ensure that Flint’s water quality continues to remain safe to drink.

BY THE NUMBERS:

\$100 Million grant to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

\$1 Billion will be leveraged from WIFIA loans for water infrastructure upgrades

\$5.1 Billion in total water infrastructure investment estimated to be spurred from EPA grants and loans

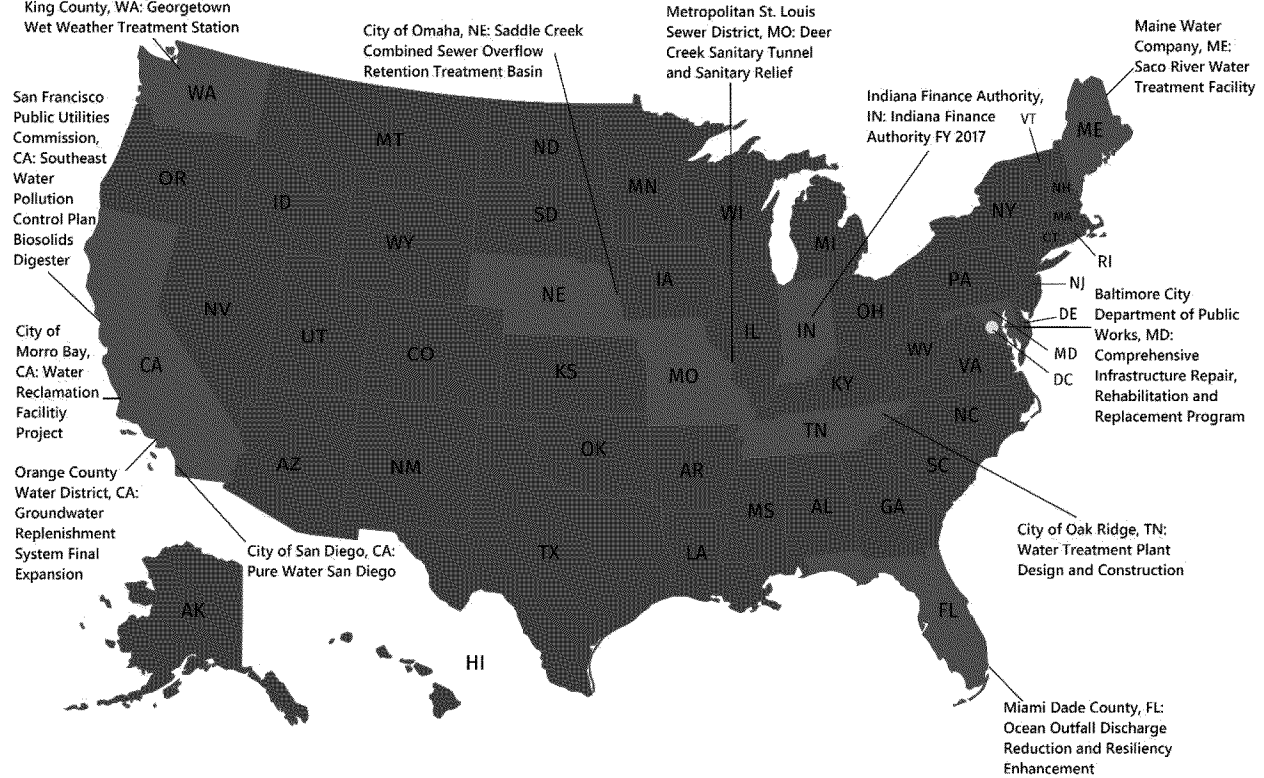
WIFIA

Critical to improving the nation’s water infrastructure is the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA). The selected projects – once finalized – will leverage more than \$1 billion in private capital and other funding sources, including EPA’s State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans, to help finance a total of \$5.1 billion in water infrastructure investments.

Stream Electric Effluent Limitations Guidelines Rule

After careful reconsideration, EPA finalized a rule postponing certain compliance dates by two years for the effluent limitations guidelines and standards for steam electric power plants under the Clean Water Act. It had been estimated to cost an average of \$480 million annually including \$1.2 billion annually during the first five years of compliance.

From wastewater and drinking water to storm water and water recycling projects, WIFIA loans will finance water infrastructure improvements across the country



LAND: Revitalize Land for Reuse

Superfund

The number of toxic sites being added to EPA’s National Priorities List (NPL) has increased under every administration since the first list was released under President Ronald Reagan. By the end of 2018, EPA will be on track to delete from the NPL, in whole or part, over 20 Superfund sites.

Ensuring the Superfund program and EPA’s land and water cleanup efforts operate effectively and efficiently is a cornerstone of the Agency’s core mission. In elevating EPA’s focus on Superfund cleanup, Administrator Pruitt created a Superfund Task Force – comprised of Agency experts from the Office of Land and Emergency Management, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Office of General Counsel, and Regional Offices – to streamline and improve the program.

Within a few months, the Superfund Task Force released its report providing 42 specific and detailed recommendations under the following overarching goals:

- 1. **Expediting Cleanup and Remediation**
- 2. **Re-Invigorating Responsible Party Cleanup and Reuse**
- 3. **Encouraging Private Investment**
- 4. **Promoting Redevelopment and Community Revitalization**
- 5. **Engaging Partners and Stakeholders**

Following the recommendations of the Superfund Task Force, Administrator Pruitt released two dynamic lists of Superfund sites on the NPL including an initial set of 21 sites targeted for immediate and intense attention and 31 sites with the greatest expected redevelopment and commercial potential.

East Chicago, Indiana:

As one of his first acts in office, Administrator Pruitt visited the USS Lead Superfund Site in East Chicago, Ind., a site that was listed on the NPL in 2009. In meetings with East Chicago residents, and federal, state, and local offices, he pledged improved coordination and communications as cleanup continues. The site is now on Administrator Pruitt’s list of sites targeted for immediate and intense action.

West Lake, Missouri:

On February 1, 2018, after decades of inaction, EPA put forth its proposed plan to clean up the West Lake Landfill, a dumping ground for radioactive waste from the Manhattan Project. The plan calls for the removal of a majority of the most radiologically impacted material.

“We’ve gone without a decision at the site for 10 years, and it’s time that we have direction,” said Karen Nickel of the Just Moms St. Louis advocacy group. (St. Louis’ CBS Radio, 02/01/18)

San Jacinto, Texas:

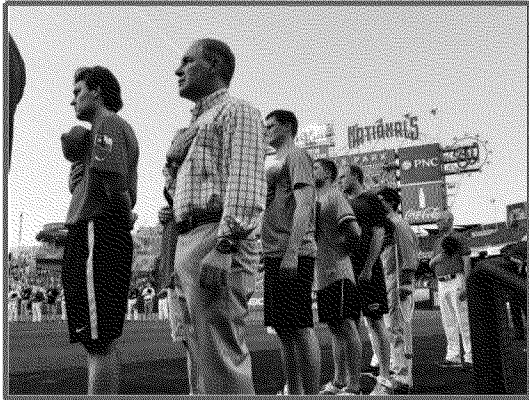
The cleanup plan to address highly toxic dioxin contamination at the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund site in Harris County was approved by Administrator Pruitt in the fall of 2017. By permanently addressing risks posed by the contamination, the plan provides certainty to both people living near the site and economic interests, including the businesses that rely on the San Jacinto River for navigation and the Interstate-10 transportation corridor.

“Not long after Hurricane Harvey battered Houston last summer, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt stood on the banks of the San Jacinto River and surveyed a decades-old toxic waste site as divers checked whether the storm had unearthed dangerous chemicals. Days later, he ordered two corporations to spend \$115 million to excavate the contamination rather than leaving it covered.” (Washington Post, 01/23/18)

The Clarion Ledger: Pruitt addressed energy issues in Mississippi. “U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Mississippi Thursday to discuss proposed changes to the Waters of the United States rule, just days after announcing the repeal of the Clean Power Plan.” (10/13/17)

Houston Chronicle: After Harvey, Pruitt vows bold response to polluted sites around Houston. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, who has visited Texas twice since Hurricane Harvey, vowed Thursday to have ‘an answer’ by next month for a permanent solution to clean up the San Jacinto River Waste Pits.” (09/22/17)

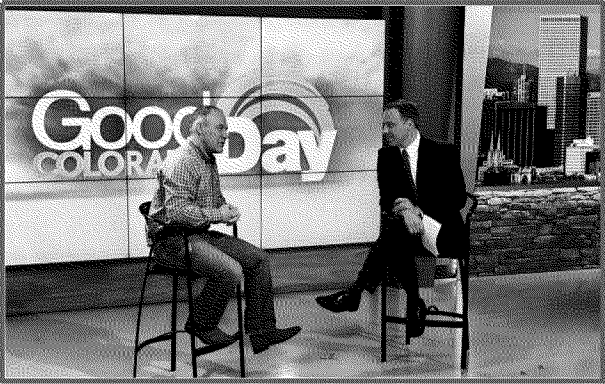
Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants ‘world, world series.’ “I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We’ve seen it in other instances and I think that’s an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.” (08/14/17)



Administrator Pruitt stands for the National Anthem at the Congressional Baseball game on June 15, 2017.

Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA Head Agrees That Des Moines Superfund Site Needs to Develop, But When? “Political Director Dave Price talked to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt about efforts to redevelop superfund sites, like Des Moines, all over the country.” (08/08/17)

Radio Iowa: Pruitt visits Iowa to discuss WOTUS. “Pruitt said his goal is to provide ‘regulatory clarity’ with a new rule, so property owners will know where federal jurisdiction begins and ends. ‘If you want to build a pond on your land,’ Pruitt said, ‘if you have natural springs on your land and you want to want to water your livestock and build (a retention) pond...and you’re not really sure whether if you do that you’re going to be subject to \$37,000-plus a day in fines if you don’t get a permit and you find it out five years from now, what does that mean? You don’t build the pond or you don’t build the subdivision or you don’t use your land the way you want.’” (08/08/17)



Denver KDVR-TV: Pruitt Gold King Mine on 2-Year Anniversary of Spill Caused by Agency. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt and Colorado leaders will tour the site of the Gold King mine spill on Friday to mark the second anniversary of the spill that dumped 3 million gallons of tainted wastewater into the Animas River.” (08/04/17)

Arkansas Democrat Gazette: Pruitt discusses WOTUS in Arkansas. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited with Arkansas Cabinet officials and agriculture representatives Thursday about changes they would like to see made to the nation’s definition of protected water bodies.” (07/21/17)



The St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Pruitt outlined his course of action to cleanup West Lake. "In a long-awaited decision that appears to be a compromise, the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday recommended partial excavation of the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton to remove radioactive waste linked to the Manhattan Project." (02/01/18)

St. Louis KMOX-TV: Just Moms STL was happy with Pruitt's decision regarding West Lake. "Dawn Chapman and Karen Nickel of the Just Moms STL advocacy group say at first, the group was worried a partial removal would mean only 5percent removed. With a 70percent or more removal — they are pleased. 'I can tell you that we are happy with this decision, and what this does for us is it gives us direction,' Nickel says. 'We've gone without a decision at the site for 10 years, and it's time that we have direction.'" (02/01/18)

Cedar Rapids Gazette: Pruitt wants to work hand in hand with states. "'What's important for us in Washington, D.C., to do is to learn and partner and work with folks at the state level to achieve good outcomes together. That just simply has not happened for a number of years,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, during a stop in Nevada." (12/01/17)

Des Moines Register: Pruitt called farmers the first "conservationists, environmentalists."

"Pruitt said the country needed to discuss what 'true environmentalism' means: 'We have been blessed with a bounty of natural resources. And some view that as 'We should simply not use them' — that we should put up fences and not use our natural resources. 'I don't buy that. We, as a country, have an obligation to feed the world and power the world,' he said, getting applause. 'When you have the natural resources like we do, we should use them to benefit our neighbors, our country and world.'" (12/01/17)

Louisville WHAS-TV: Pruitt will have changes to Obama's WOTUS. "The head of the United States Environmental Protection Agency was in Louisville Thursday with a promise of change to one of the most controversial environmental regulations for Kentucky farmers. Administrator Scott Pruitt told the Kentucky Farm Bureau's 98th Annual Meeting that the "Waters of the United States" regulation will be changed forever by mid-2018." (12/01/17)

The Chicago Tribune: Pruitt orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup. "'We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement. The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning." (10/18/17)



The first Superfund list includes sites that will benefit from Administrator Pruitt's direct engagement and have identifiable actions to protect human health and the environment. These are sites requiring timely resolution of specific issues to expedite cleanup and redevelopment efforts. Ultimately, this list is designed to spur action at sites where opportunities exist to act quickly and comprehensively.

Superfund redevelopment will help countless communities reclaim and reuse thousands of acres of formerly contaminated land. The redevelopment list easily directs interested developers and potential owners to some Superfund sites with redevelopment potential.

In 2017, EPA completed deletion activities at seven sites on the Superfund NPL in Administrator Pruitt's first year, up from two in 2016. These sites, spanning from Minnesota and Massachusetts to Wyoming and Nebraska, reflect Administrator Pruitt's commitment to accelerating progress, reducing risks at Superfund sites, and returning sites to productive use.

CERCLA Hardrock Mining

In January 2017, the previous administration proposed regulations under section 108(b) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) that would have imposed additional financial responsibility requirements on certain hardrock mining facilities. After careful analysis of nearly 11,000 public comments, EPA announced in December 2017 that it would not finalize the proposed requirements. The risks associated with these facilities' operations are already addressed by existing federal and state programs and requirements and industry practice. Finalizing these requirements would have cost American businesses and the mining industry up to \$171 million annually.

"I urged then President-elect Trump to stop the EPA's overreach into state regulation harming Montana businesses. Instead of threatening the very industries that are a backbone of our Western economies, we need to support American families and American businesses to secure our mineral and energy independence. I am pleased the EPA has taken action."

- U.S. Senate Western Caucus Chairman Steve Daines (R-MT)

Coal Ash

EPA's core mission reflects the belief that states play an integral role in environmental protection. In keeping with this notion, Administrator Pruitt provided Agency guidance to states for implementing state permitting programs to manage the safe disposal of coal combustion residuals (CCR), also known as "coal ash." The new state permitting authority — included in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act — allows flexibility in individual CCR permits that better reflect their environment and the continued beneficial use of coal ash.

EPA released this guidance to help states develop and submit permit programs that will put more states on track to obtain EPA approval of their CCR permitting program. The guidance outlines a framework of EPA's expected approval process and also provides checklists to aid states as they develop their programs.

CHEMICALS: Ensure Safety of Chemicals

Implemented the Updated Toxic Substances Control Act

EPA is working diligently to properly implement the 2016 Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which amended the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), and ensure that the most modern and safe chemicals get to market quickly in order to provide regulatory certainty for manufacturers and confidence for American consumers.

Under the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act – the first major update to an environmental statute in 20 years – EPA is responsible for reviewing and approving the safety of new chemicals intent on entering the U.S. marketplace. When Administrator Pruitt was confirmed, over 600 new chemicals were stuck in review. Within four months of being confirmed, EPA halved the backlog of new chemical submissions being reviewed under TSCA, and by August, Administrator Pruitt effectively eliminated the backlog.

In addition, EPA exceeded expectations and met its statutory responsibilities under TSCA on time and the one-year anniversary of the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act. This included issuing three new framework rules, providing a guidance document for external parties, and releasing the scoping documents for the first 10 risk evaluations, under a reformed TSCA.

Chlorpyrifos

In 2007, EPA received a petition asking the Agency to revoke the tolerances for the pesticide chlorpyrifos. In March 2017, EPA denied the petition citing that: the Ninth Circuit would not provide additional time to review the issue; there were divergent views from cabinet departments; and the scheduled FIFRA

pesticide review process would be transparent, and allow more time to further evaluate the science.

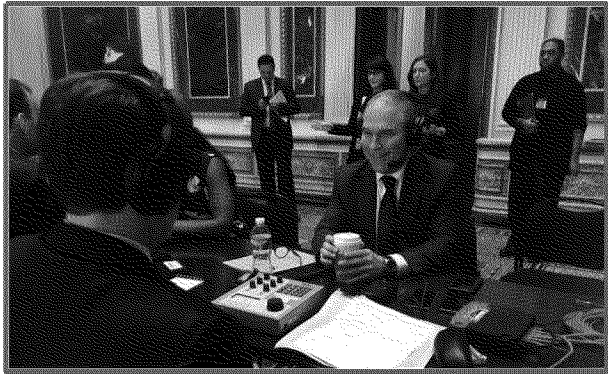
On July 18, 2017, the Ninth Circuit ruled in EPA’s favor, refusing to short-circuit the process established by Congress to challenge a denial of a petition to revoke a tolerance, affording EPA additional time to conduct a proper evaluation of the science and the studies on chlorpyrifos and provide greater certainty about the pesticide’s safety to the American people.

Dicamba

On October 13, 2017, EPA reached an agreement with manufacturers on measures to further minimize the potential for dicamba drift to damage neighboring crops. New requirements for the use of dicamba "over the top" (application to growing plants) will allow farmers to make informed choices for seed purchases for the 2018 growing season. EPA worked cooperatively with states, land-grant universities, and pesticide manufacturers to examine the underlying causes of recent crop damage in certain regions and reach an agreement that will provide regulatory certainty for farmers.

TSCA MILESTONES:

- ✓ Swiftly implemented the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act updates to TSCA
- ✓ Finalized 3 new framework rules
- ✓ Released scoping documents for first 10 risk evaluations
- ✓ Provided guidance on risk evaluation process
- ✓ Proposed final framework rule on TSCA fees



The New York Times’ ‘The Daily.’ Pruitt discusses how he’s focused on protecting the environment and human health. “The role of a regulator is to make things regular. To take a statue, to use its authority, to fairly enforce it.” (02/02/18)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on ‘so called’ Clean Power Plan. “For the first time ever, the EPA took its authority and said we can dictate, really coerce states and utility companies across the country and tell them how to generate electricity. You know, when you look at how we generate electricity in this country, we obviously use multiple energy sources.” (10/11/17)



ABC News “Powerhouse Politics Podcast.” Scott Pruitt talks about Hurricane Irma recovery efforts. “There’s many issues, from drinking water to Superfund to debris management and landfills, that we’re dealing with in this kind of situation.” (09/08/17)

Fox News’ Brian Kilmeade Show: EPA Chairman Scott Pruitt on potential ramifications of pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement. “We are leading the world now, we are at pre-1994 levels with our CO-2 footprint, not because of Paris, not because of a government mandate but because of innovation and technology. For those who say we are going to lose our seat at the table, we are the United States, we don’t lose our seat at the table.” (05/19/17)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on new direction for science boards at the EPA. “You know, Hugh, asyou know, the board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. And what’s really been emphasized by Congress as I went through the confirmation process is geographical representation, because you want to ensure as you’re dealing with rulemaking – air, water, whatever rulemaking we’re doing, that the geographical uniqueness of our country as we’re patching rules is taken in consideration.” (05/11/17)

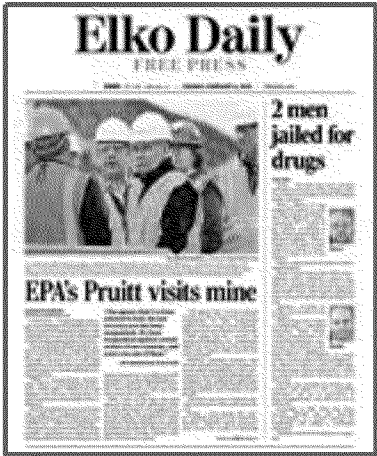
REGIONAL MEDIA

Reno KRNV-TV: Pruitt discusses his visit to Nevada. “Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt sat down with News 4’s Bill Frankmore on Monday morning to discuss his event with Governor Brian Sandoval at Anaconda Mine in Lyon County regarding future clean-up and his visit with miners at Coeur Rochester Mine in Lovelock.” (02/05/18)

rest of the world applauded ... because it put this country at disadvantage... It's a bad deal for this country. We're going to make sure as we make deals we're going to put the interests of America first." (06/04/17)

The Washington Post: Scott Pruitt, outspoken and forceful, moves to the center of power within the Trump administration. "Less than four months ago, Scott Pruitt arrived in Washington with few connections to President Trump's inner circle and took the helm of an agency where many employees were openly hostile to him. But the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency has emerged as one of the most influential policy architects in the president's Cabinet, a skilled and sometimes brash lawyer who is methodically taking apart a slew of regulations and agreements affecting a range of issues, from manufacturing operations to landfills." (06/02/17)

Need to Know Network: Pruitt promises to put states back in the driver's seat on regulations. "Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will." (05/11/17)



The Hill: EPA seeks governors' input in rewriting Obama water rule. "EPA is restoring

states' important role in the regulation of water,' Pruitt said in a statement. 'Like President Trump, I believe that we need to work with our state governments to understand what they think is the best way to protect their waters, and what actions they are already taking to do so. We want to return to a regulatory partnership, rather than regulate by executive fiat.'" (05/09/17)

The Washington Examiner: EPA Head Pruitt: We hear East Chicago's concerns 'loud and clear.' "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited East Chicago on Wednesday to assure residents, state and local leaders that Washington is meeting its commitments to protect citizens from lead contamination. 'Their concerns were heard loud and clear, and I am committed to ensuring that the EPA works with our federal, state and local partners to find solutions that protect the health and safety of East Chicago,' Pruitt said." (04/19/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Scott Pruitt's Back-to-Basics Agenda for the EPA. "You might call him an EPA originalist... When Mr. Pruitt sat down Thursday for his first interview since his November nomination, he spent most of the time waxing enthusiastic about all the good his agency can accomplish once he refocuses it on its statutorily defined mission: working cooperatively with the states to improve water and air quality." (02/17/17)

NATIONAL RADIO & PODCAST

The Daily Signal Podcast: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt explains how the Agency has changed under President Trump's leadership. "The weaponization of the Environmental Protection agency is over,' says Administrator Scott Pruitt." (02/26/18)

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of environmental protection laws is sustained by collaborative efforts of states, businesses, private citizens, and federal agencies like EPA. Within the last year, Administrator Pruitt implemented a two-pronged approach to enforcement: 1) ensuring the regulated community understands and complies with the law, and 2) vigorously holding bad actors accountable. This was achieved through a wide range of enforcement tools, including: compliance assistance, civil actions, administrative actions, informal actions, work-sharing with states, criminal fines, and incarceration where appropriate.

The Seattle Times

Amazon, EPA Reach \$1.2 Million Settlement Over Online Sales of Illegal Pesticides

"Seattle-based Amazon has agreed to pay more than \$1.2 million in administrative penalties as part of an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that the agency says will protect consumers from hazards of illegal and misbranded pesticides sold by the online retail giant ...

"The penalty was one of the largest ever of its kind by the agency ...

"[A]s a result of the settlement, Amazon has indicated it is now 'committed to closely monitoring and removing illegal pesticides from its website,' [EPA Region 10 Administrator Chris] Hladick said in the agency's news release."

BY THE NUMBERS:

From January 20, 2017 through the end of FY17, EPA and the U.S. Department of Justice imposed:

- ✓ More than \$1.72 billion in civil penalties, cost recovery, natural resource damages, and other monetary recoveries;
- ✓ More than \$2.91 billion in criminal fines, restitution, and other assessments; and
- ✓ More than \$3.13 billion in injunctive relief and environmental mitigation projects.

Enforcement Actions Announced Since Close of FY17:

- ✓ ExxonMobil: \$300 million air pollution settlement with Exxon, 10/31/17
- ✓ PDC Energy: EPA, Colorado reached \$21 million-plus settlement with PDC, 10/31/17
- ✓ Indiana Harbor Coke Company: Settled with EPA and agreed to reduce annual emissions of pollutants from their coke ovens by 2,075 tons, 1/25/18
- ✓ Superfunds: In one case, EPA held 40 parties responsible to finance and perform a \$51.5 million EPA-approved cleanup, 10/13/17
- ✓ Silver Bow Creek Butte Area Superfund site: Reached an agreement in principle with responsible parties after languishing on the NPL for more than 35 years 1/26/18
- ✓ Middletown, Ohio: EPA entered into agreement with the city to address the discharge of millions of gallons untreated sewage into the Great Miami River and Hydraulic Canal, 2/12/18

Cooperative Federalism and Public Participation

Under Administrator Pruitt's leadership, states are once again being treated as partners in efforts to protect the environment. In his first year, Administrator Pruitt worked to empower state and local partners to develop regulations that achieve positive environmental outcomes. Putting his words into action, Administrator Pruitt got out of Washington and heard directly from stakeholders in 30 states and territories.



Enhanced Shared Accountability

Governor Steve Bullock (D-MT): "The change in the federal administration offers us as governors the opportunity to develop new relationships and to build stronger state and federal relationships."



Administrator Pruitt meets with the bipartisan Western Governors Association with U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta and U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.



Governor Rick Scott (R-FL): "It is great to have a partner in Administrator Pruitt and the Trump Administration and I am glad to see their focus on protecting Florida's environment for future generations."

Governor Mark Dayton (D-MN): "Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. 'We don't believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,' Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour."

Governor Kim Reynolds (R-IA): "The governor said Pruitt indicated the new regulations would define what areas are not under federal jurisdiction. A court suspended the 'Waters of the U.S.' rules written by the Obama Administration before they took effect, but Reynolds said farmers delayed conservation measures and other land improvements because of the uncertainty about what might come next, which 'Dramatically had an impact on our ability to move forward with conservation practices for not only water quality, for soil health,' she said."

Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): "It's great to have an administrator of the EPA," McConnell said as he introduced Pruitt, "who's not afraid to come to Kentucky."

turning Trump's rhetoric into reality: Scott Pruitt." (09/01/17)



The Daily Caller: EPA's Scott Pruitt: What was so great about Obama's environmental record? "Everyone looks at the Obama administration as being the environmental savior. Really? He was the environmental savior...Well, he left us with more Superfund sites than when he came in. He had Gold King [the 2015 mine wastewater spill] and Flint, Michigan [drinking water crisis]. He tried to regulate CO2 twice and flunked twice. Struck out. So what's so great about that record? I don't know.'" (09/13/17)

Washington Examiner: Pruitt advances Back-to-Basics agenda. "Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he's quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a 'back to the basics' agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity." (09/13/17)

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA workforce approaching lowest levels since Reagan. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs." (09/06/17)

The Washington Examiner: Scott Pruitt criticizes Obama as 'environmental savior,' moves EPA away from climate change. "Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he's quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a 'back to the basics' agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity — namely, the climate change battle taken up by former President Barack Obama, who he questioned as an "environmental savior." (09/13/17)

Reuters: Pruitt gave a wide-ranging interview about protecting the environment and American jobs. "The past administration was all about words. This administration is all about action. Look at the actions this country has taken. We have reduced our greenhouse gas levels to pre-1994 levels primarily through technology and innovation, not through government mandate. We have nothing to be apologetic about with the rest of the world." (07/11/17)

Wall Street Journal: EPA to Unveil New Chemical Testing Rules. "The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday will release new rules to clarify the agency's process of testing the chemicals used in everyday products and other commerce, a matter of deep importance to manufacturers, consumers and environmental advocates." (06/22/17)

The Daily Caller: Trump Delays One of the Most Expensive EPA Regulations Ever. "The Trump administration announced Tuesday evening it would delay the implementation of a smog rule that's been called one of the costliest clean air regulations ever." (06/07/17)

The Washington Post: EPA head Scott Pruitt defends Paris exit. "When we joined Paris, the

balance between growing our economy, growing jobs while also being a good steward of our environment,' he said. Between 2000 and 2014, America reduced 'its carbon emissions by 18-plus percent. And this was accomplished not through government mandate, but accomplished through innovation and technology of the American private sector.'" (12/15/17)

Bloomberg: Administrator Pruitt lands on the list of 50 people defining global business in 2017. (11/30/17)

USA Today: Scott Pruitt on a mission to change the climate of the EPA. "He's on a mission to re-engineer the agency's culture by returning power to states and away from the Washington bureaucrats and coastal elites he said have led it astray." (11/26/17)

TIME: Inside Scott Pruitt's Mission to Remake the EPA. "Pruitt has pioneered a radically different approach to environmental regulation, weighing impact on job growth and the concerns of business groups on a level plane with environmental protection when the law allows." (10/26/17)

Bloomberg: EPA's Pruitt Vows to Get Tough on Polluters. "Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, vowed that he will get tough on corporate polluters, dismissing critics who cast him as too cozy with industry. 'They don't know me,' Pruitt said, during an interview with Bloomberg News in his Washington office. 'I've led a grand jury. We are going to do enforcement, to go after bad actors and go after polluters.'" (10/25/17)

The Daily Signal: Trump's EPA Chief Charts a New Course. "My job is to enforce the laws as passed by whom? Congress. They give me my authority. That's the jurisdictional responsibilities that I have, and when litigation

is used to regulate...that's abusive. That's wrong." (10/20/17)

TIME: Administrator Pruitt on Enforcement: "I don't spend any time with polluters. I prosecute polluters." (10/20/17)

Talking Points Memo: Pruitt Talks About New 'Sue and Settle' Policy. "Pruitt pledged that the agency would no longer reimburse attorneys' fees in cases where it decides to avoid a lawsuit, arguing that both environmental and business groups had abused it to enrich themselves in the past. 'This is not particular to one type of plaintiff,' he said. 'There should be no attorneys' fees paid, period, no matter who the plaintiff is.'" (10/16/17)

Fox News: EPA moves to repeal Obama's Clean Power Plan coal regulations. "That rule really was about picking winners and losers,' Pruitt said. 'The past administration was unapologetic, they were using every bit of power, authority to use the EPA to pick winners and losers on how we pick electricity in this country. That is wrong.'" (10/09/17)

The New York Times: EPA Announces Repeal of Major Obama-era Carbon Emissions Rule. "Mr. Pruitt, who had signaled the move at an event with coal miners in eastern Kentucky on Monday, said in a news release that his predecessors had departed from regulatory norms in writing the Clean Power Plan, which was finalized in 2015 and would have pushed states to move away from coal in favor of sources of electricity that produce fewer carbon emissions." (10/09/17)

Politico Top 50: #9 Scott Pruitt. "Donald Trump's pledge to unravel Barack Obama's climate agenda may be—in the long run—the single most significant action he takes as president. And there's one man tasked with



Administrator Pruitt hosts U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan and other members of the President's Task Force on Environmental Risks and Safety Risks to Children to address childhood lead exposure.

Stakeholder Engagement

Smart Sectors

In October 2017, EPA launched Smart Sectors, a voluntary partnership program between the Agency and regulated sectors that takes a collaborative approach to consider more forward-thinking ways to protect the environment and provide regulatory certainty. Since the program's official launch, the Smart Sectors team met with over 80 trade associations, companies, or stakeholder groups. The team conducted seven informational site visits with a variety of sectors including ports, iron and steel, oil and gas, chemical manufacturing, and agriculture and has many site visits planned for 2018. The Smart Sectors program maintains open dialogue with these partners and their environmental committees and is developing reports that profile the impact of each sector on the environment and the economy.



"The American Wood Council supports a smarter, more sensible and cost-effective regulatory process, such as the approach taken by EPA's Smart Sectors Program."

- Robert Glowinski, President and CEO of the American Wood Council

Grants

EPA awards over \$4 billion grants annually to states, tribes, and local communities. In FY17:

- ✓ \$20.2 million was provided through National Estuary Program grants to 32 communities
- ✓ \$56.8 million in Brownfields grants to 172 communities for revitalizing land
- ✓ \$33 million Clean Diesel Program grants to 72 communities

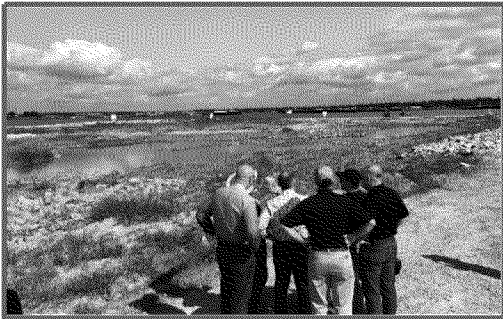
HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ EPA awarded \$1.2 million in competitive grants to 36 local-based community and tribal organizations for community-driven solutions to local health and environmental issues in minority, low-income, and tribal communities.
- ✓ EPA Announces \$7.2 Million in Brownfields Grants to Promote Economic Redevelopment Across the Pacific Southwest
- ✓ EPA Awards \$2.6 Million to Cut Diesel Emissions in New York and New Jersey
- ✓ EPA Awards \$4.4 Million to Restore Lake Champlain and Protect Against Harmful Algal Blooms
- ✓ EPA Awards \$173.5 million for California Drinking Water and Wastewater Projects
- ✓ EPA Awards \$32 Million for Tribal Environmental Programs in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest

Natural Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery

Throughout 2017, EPA worked closely with states and territories to prepare for and respond to a number of natural disasters including: Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and catastrophic wildfires in the West.

As a result of the continuing impacts on Gulf Coast-area refineries and disruption to the fuel distribution system caused by the 2017 hurricanes, Administrator Pruitt acted quickly to exercise EPA’s emergency fuel waiver authority to help ensure adequate supply of fuel throughout the country by approving emergency fuel waivers for 38 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Governors across the country praised EPA’s quick actions, which ensured there was no disruption in the fuel supply for power generators, evacuations and emergency response efforts.



Administrator Pruitt traveled to Houston, Texas to review the Agency’s response efforts and meet with stakeholders monitoring cleanup efforts at the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund site (pictured above).

In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Administrator Pruitt joined President Trump in Puerto Rico to review the Agency’s response efforts. EPA focused its efforts on environmental impacts and potential threats to human health in the affected areas by coordinating with local governments in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) to assess the conditions of drinking water, which includes sampling, analysis and lab support, and getting wastewater treatment systems up and running.

STATS AT A GLANCE

Hurricane Harvey:

- ✓ Conducted on-site assessments at approximately 625 drinking water and 440 wastewater treatment facilities
- ✓ Collected more than 1,000 orphan containers, which included drums and tanks found floated in or washed up near waterways
- ✓ Safely disposed of over 20 million cubic yards of debris

Hurricane Irma:

- ✓ Reviewed and secured 23 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico and USVI and 80 sites from Miami to North Carolina
- ✓ Extended fuel waiver for 38 states and D.C.

Hurricane Maria:

- ✓ Completed over 1,000 drinking water assessments in USVI
- ✓ Collected more than 225,000 items of household hazardous waste, goods and electronic waste in Puerto Rico and USVI
- ✓ Assessed close to 400 vessels in Puerto Rico and 500 in USVI with the U.S. Coast Guard



Rick Scott
@FLGovScott

Following

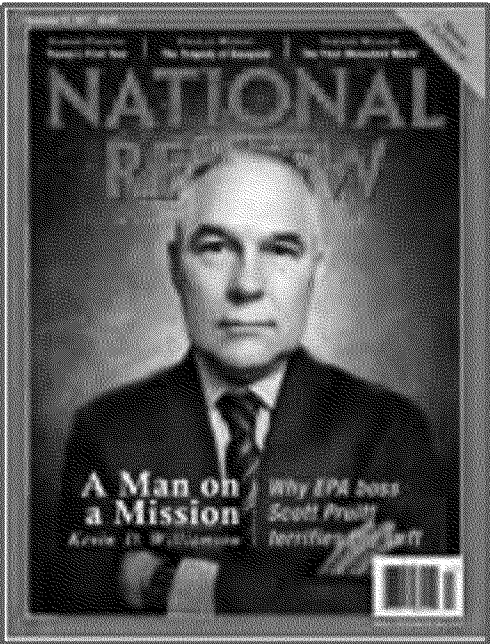
.@EPA has approved an emergency fuel waiver, allowing more fuel to enter FL quickly for #HurricaneIrma prep: bit.ly/2j6apgC

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transform a culture he says is bureaucratic.” (01/17/18)

E&E News: Pruitt Meets with Moms Clean Air Force. Dominique Browning ... co-founder and senior director of Moms Clean Air Force, along with other officials from her organization, met last week with Pruitt and three members of his staff at EPA’s Washington, D.C., headquarters ... “Browning said her impression of Pruitt was that he is ‘determined’ as well as ‘intense, aggressive and focused. And the other thing on my impression is [he is] really, really smart,’ she added.” (1/15/18)

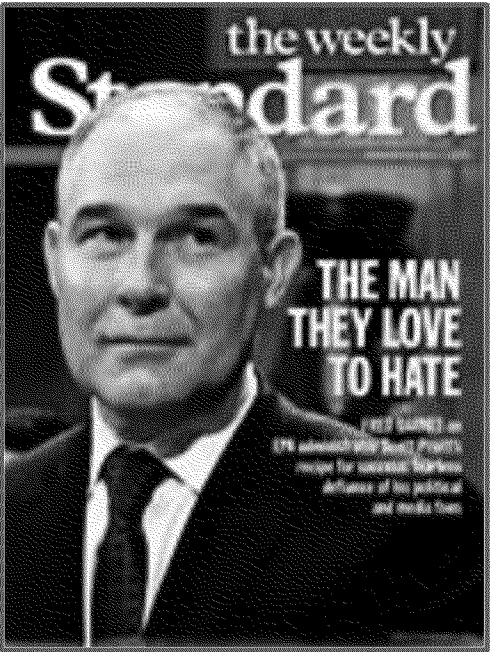
The Hill: EPA staffing falls to Reagan-era levels. “EPA’s staffing is now lower than it was in former President Reagan’s final year in office. An EPA spokeswoman said Tuesday that, as of Jan. 3, the agency had 14,162 employees, down from about 15,000 at the beginning of last year. That’s even lower than the 14,400 employees the agency had in fiscal year 1988, Reagan’s final year.” (01/09/18)



National Review: Scott Pruitt’s Reformation. “Stewardship, Pruitt says, is making responsible use of our national blessings, including our

natural resources: ‘Feed the world and fuel the world,’ he says, over and over. But the Left — and the EPA, which has long been dominated by it — is not interested in stewardship. It’s interested in prohibition, in a lot of Thou shalt and a whole heck of a lot more Thou shalt not. ‘You have two different approaches, two different worldviews, two very different sets of assumptions,’ Pruitt says.” (12/31/17)

The Washington Post: How Scott Pruitt turned the EPA into one of Trump’s most powerful tools. “... aggressiveness on issues from coal waste to vehicle emissions has made Pruitt one of Trump’s most high-profile and consequential Cabinet members. It also has made him one of the most controversial ... Yet, allies praise Pruitt for returning more power to individual states while scaling back what they see as the previous administration’s regulatory excesses.” (12/31/17)



The Weekly Standard: The Man They Love to Hate. “Pruitt lauded the president for his ‘unflinching commitment to put America first’ and followed with what has become the theme of his EPA tenure. The United States does ‘better than anyone in the world in striking the

Administration-wide. In our agency alone, \$1 billion of cost savings.” (02/24/18)

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CNBC: EPA takes aim at CAFE standards. “We can be both pro-growth, pro-jobs and pro-environment, says Scott Pruitt, EPA administrator, discussing the agency’s new agenda and plans to roll back regulations and tackle fuel standards.” (03/09/17)

NATIONAL PRINT

GQ Magazine: The 50 Most Powerful People in Trump’s Washington. “#5 EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt: In a Cabinet that doesn’t get much done, Pruitt has been dangerously effective.” (02/22/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt said West Lake sends a results-driven message. “‘This sends a message that we’re actually going to get results,’ Mr. Pruitt said. ‘Frankly it’s just what we ought to be doing.’” (02/01/18)

Washington Examiner: EPA’s Scott Pruitt declares ‘war on lead.’ “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has begun an effort to ‘eradicate’ lead poisoning from drinking water, more than three years after the crisis in Flint, Michigan, started. Pruitt hosted a meeting Jan. 8 for state and local officials at agency headquarters in Washington to obtain feedback on ways to update the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule ... It has not been revised in more than a decade.” (01/23/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt aims to accelerate his efforts to remake the EPA. “Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt plans to use his second year on the job to accelerate efforts to remake the agency, saying he wants to speed its permitting processes and

Rule of Law

Agency Reform

Sue and Settle

Over the years, special interest groups skirted the regulatory process by using lawsuits that seek to force federal agencies – especially EPA – to issue regulations that advance their interests and priorities, on their specified timeframe. During this process, known as “sue and settle,” EPA would get sued by an outside party that asked the court to compel the Agency to take certain steps, either through change in a statutory duty or enforcing timelines set by the law, and then EPA would acquiesce through a consent decree or settlement agreement, affecting the Agency’s obligations under the statute.

“The days of regulation through litigation are over. We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement agreements to resolve lawsuits filed against the Agency by special interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress. Additionally, gone are the days of routinely paying tens of thousands of dollars in attorney’s fees to these groups with which we swiftly settle.”

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

“Sue and settle” cases establish Agency obligations without participation by states and/or the regulated community; foreclose meaningful public participation in rulemaking; effectively force the Agency to reach certain regulatory outcomes; and, cost the American taxpayer millions of dollars.

In fulfilling his promise to end the practice of regulation through litigation that has harmed

the American public, EPA Administrator Pruitt issued an Agency-wide directive in October 2017 designed to end “sue and settle” practices within the Agency, providing an unprecedented level of public participation and transparency in EPA litigation, in addition to consent decrees and settlement agreements.

Advisory Committees

EPA’s Federal Advisory Committees (FACs) provide invaluable, independent scientific advice to the Agency. However, according to EPA calculations, in just three years, members of three of EPA’s FACs – the Science Advisory Board (SAB), Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), and the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) – received upwards of \$77 million in direct EPA grant funding while concurrently serving on these committees.

Administrator Pruitt’s directive ensures that EPA’s FACs provide a diverse and independent range of perspectives. Members serving on an EPA FAC shall not simultaneously receive grants from the Agency. In addition, Administrator Pruitt called for more geographic diversity, more frequent rotation in membership, and greater involvement by state, local, and tribal officials. The new membership for SAB, CASAC, and BOSC hails from over 40 states and D.C., compared to the prior total of 30 states and D.C. EPA received more than 700 applications from interested individuals throughout the country to serve on EPA’s science boards.

Media Highlights

EDITORIALS

The Wall Street Journal: Pruitt’s ends sue and settle practices also known as ‘extortion by environmental lawsuit.’ “Scott Pruitt continues to press reform at the Environmental Protection Agency, this week issuing a directive to curb the collusive Washington game of “sue and settle” lawsuits. This is a victory for democratic consent over legal extortion.” (10/18/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Pruitt’s clean power break. “The Trump Administration is giving the economy a boost with its deregulatory agenda, and the latest example comes Tuesday when Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt will propose to repeal the Obama Administration’s Clean Power Plan. Ending this power grab will uphold the letter of the law and restore cooperative federalism with the states.” (10/08/17)

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Denver Post: Pruitt Right to Pursue Funds for Gold King Mine Victims. “Scott Pruitt, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, is doing the right thing in his efforts to make whole the victims of the Gold King Mine spill that spewed 3 million of gallons of toxic water into the Animas River and downstream to New Mexico.” (08/18/17)

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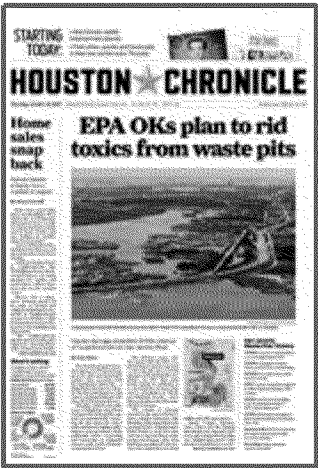
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NATIONAL PRINT

GQ Magazine: The 50 Most Powerful People in Trump’s Washington. “#5 EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt: In a Cabinet that doesn’t get much done, Pruitt has been dangerously effective.” (02/22/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt said West Lake sends a results-driven message. “‘This sends a message that we’re actually going to get results,’ Mr. Pruitt said. ‘Frankly it’s just what we ought to be doing.’” (02/01/18)

Washington Examiner: EPA’s Scott Pruitt declares ‘war on lead.’ “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has begun an effort to ‘eradicate’ lead poisoning from drinking water, more than three years after the crisis in Flint, Michigan, started. Pruitt hosted a meeting Jan. 8 for state and local officials at agency headquarters in Washington to obtain feedback on ways to update the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule ... It has not been revised in more than a decade.” (01/23/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt aims to accelerate his efforts to remake the EPA. “Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt plans to use his second year on the job to accelerate efforts to remake the agency, saying he wants to speed its permitting processes and transform a culture he says is bureaucratic.” (01/17/18)

E&E News: Pruitt Meets with Moms Clean Air Force. Dominique Browning ... co-founder and senior director of Moms Clean Air Force, along with other officials from her organization, met last week with Pruitt and three members of his staff at EPA’s Washington, D.C., headquarters ... “Browning said her impression of Pruitt was that he is ‘determined’ as well as ‘intense, aggressive and focused. And the other thing on my impression is [he is] really, really smart,’ she added.” (1/15/18)

The Hill: EPA staffing falls to Reagan-era levels. “EPA’s staffing is now lower than it was in former President Reagan’s final year in office. An EPA spokeswoman said Tuesday that, as of Jan. 3, the agency had 14,162 employees, down from about 15,000 at the beginning of last year. That’s even lower than the 14,400 employees the agency had in fiscal year 1988, Reagan’s final year.” (01/09/18)

National Review: Scott Pruitt’s Reformation. “*Stewardship*, Pruitt says, is making responsible use of our national blessings, including our natural resources: ‘Feed the world and fuel the world,’ he says, over and over. But the Left — and the EPA, which has long been dominated by it — is not interested in stewardship. It’s interested in prohibition, in a lot of Thou shalt and a whole heck of a lot more Thou shalt not. ‘You have two different approaches, two different worldviews, two very different sets of assumptions,’ Pruitt says.” (12/31/17)

The Washington Post: How Scott Pruitt turned the EPA into one of Trump’s most powerful tools. “... aggressiveness on issues from coal waste to vehicle emissions has made Pruitt one of Trump’s most high-profile and consequential Cabinet members. It also has made him one of the most controversial ... Yet, allies praise Pruitt for returning more power to individual states while scaling back what they see as the previous administration’s regulatory excesses.” (12/31/17)

The Weekly Standard: The Man They Love to Hate. “Pruitt lauded the president for his ‘unflinching commitment to put America first’ and followed with what has become the theme of his EPA tenure. The United States does ‘better than anyone in the world in striking the balance between growing our economy, growing jobs while also being a good steward of our environment,’ he said. Between 2000 and 2014, America reduced ‘its carbon emissions by 18-plus percent. And this was accomplished not through government mandate, but accomplished through innovation and technology of the American private sector.’” (12/15/17)

Bloomberg: Administrator Pruitt lands on the list of 50 people defining global business in 2017. (11/30/17)

USA Today: Scott Pruitt on a mission to change the climate of the EPA. “He’s on a mission to re-engineer the agency’s culture by returning power to states and away from the Washington bureaucrats and coastal elites he said have led it astray.” (11/26/17)

TIME: Inside Scott Pruitt’s Mission to Remake the EPA. “Pruitt has pioneered a radically different approach to environmental regulation, weighing impact on job growth and the concerns of business groups on a level plane with environmental protection when the law allows.” (10/26/17)

Bloomberg: EPA’s Pruitt Vows to Get Tough on Polluters. “Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, vowed that he will get tough on corporate polluters, dismissing critics who cast him as too cozy with industry. ‘They don’t know me,’ Pruitt said, during an interview with Bloomberg News in his Washington office. ‘I’ve led a grand jury. We are going to do enforcement, to go after bad actors and go after polluters.’” (10/25/17)

The Daily Signal: Trump’s EPA Chief Charts a New Course. “My job is to enforce the laws as passed by whom? Congress. They give me my authority. That’s the jurisdictional responsibilities that I have, and when litigation is used to regulate...that’s abusive. That’s wrong.” (10/20/17)

TIME: Administrator Pruitt on Enforcement: “I don’t spend any time with polluters. I

prosecute polluters.” (10/20/17)

Talking Points Memo: Pruitt Talks About New ‘Sue and Settle’ Policy. “Pruitt pledged that the agency would no longer reimburse attorneys’ fees in cases where it decides to avoid a lawsuit, arguing that both environmental and business groups had abused it to enrich themselves in the past. ‘This is not particular to one type of plaintiff,’ he said. ‘There should be no attorneys’ fees paid, period, no matter who the plaintiff is.’” (10/16/17)

Fox News: EPA moves to repeal Obama’s Clean Power Plan coal regulations. “‘That rule really was about picking winners and losers,’ Pruitt said. ‘The past administration was unapologetic, they were using every bit of power, authority to use the EPA to pick winners and losers on how we pick electricity in this country. That is wrong.’” (10/09/17)

The New York Times: EPA Announces Repeal of Major Obama-era Carbon Emissions Rule. “Mr. Pruitt, who had signaled the move at an event with coal miners in eastern Kentucky on Monday, said in a news release that his predecessors had departed from regulatory norms in writing the Clean Power Plan, which was finalized in 2015 and would have pushed states to move away from coal in favor of sources of electricity that produce fewer carbon emissions.” (10/09/17)

Politico Top 50: #9 Scott Pruitt. “Donald Trump’s pledge to unravel Barack Obama’s climate agenda may be—in the long run—the single most significant action he takes as president. And there’s one man tasked with turning Trump’s rhetoric into reality: Scott Pruitt.” (09/01/17)

The Daily Caller: EPA’s Scott Pruitt: What was so great about Obama’s environmental record? “‘Everyone looks at the Obama administration as being the environmental savior. Really? He was the environmental savior...Well, he left us with more Superfund sites than when he came in. He had Gold King [the 2015 mine wastewater spill] and Flint, Michigan [drinking water crisis]. He tried to regulate CO2 twice and flunked twice. Struck out. So what’s so great about that record? I don’t know.’” (09/13/17)

Washington Examiner: Pruitt advances Back-to-Basics agenda. “Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he’s quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a ‘back to the basics’ agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity.” (09/13/17)

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA workforce approaching lowest levels since Reagan. “We’re giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early,” Pruitt said. “We’re proud to report that we’re reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs.” (09/06/17)

The Washington Examiner: Scott Pruitt criticizes Obama as ‘environmental savior,’ moves EPA away from climate change. “Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he’s quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a ‘back to the basics’ agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity — namely, the climate change battle taken up by former President Barack Obama, who he questioned as an “environmental savior.” (09/13/17)

Reuters: Pruitt gave a wide-ranging interview about protecting the environment and American jobs. “The past administration was all about words. This administration is all about action. Look at the actions this country has taken. We have reduced our greenhouse gas levels to pre-1994 levels primarily through technology and innovation, not through government mandate. We have nothing to be apologetic about with the rest of the world.” (07/11/17)

Wall Street Journal: EPA to Unveil New Chemical Testing Rules. “The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday will release new rules to clarify the agency’s process of testing the chemicals used in everyday products and other commerce, a matter of deep importance to manufacturers, consumers and environmental advocates.” (06/22/17)

The Daily Caller: Trump Delays One of the Most Expensive EPA Regulations Ever. “The Trump administration announced Tuesday evening it would delay the implementation of a smog rule that’s been called one of the costliest clean air regulations ever.” (06/07/17)

The Washington Post: EPA head Scott Pruitt defends Paris exit. “When we joined Paris, the rest of the world applauded ... because it put this country at disadvantage... It’s a bad deal for this country. We’re going to make sure as we make deals we’re going to put the interests of America first.” (06/04/17)

The Washington Post: Scott Pruitt, outspoken and forceful, moves to the center of power within the Trump administration. “Less than four months ago, Scott Pruitt arrived in Washington with few connections to President Trump’s inner circle and took the helm of an agency where many employees were openly hostile to him. But the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency has emerged as one of the most influential policy architects in the president’s Cabinet, a skilled and sometimes brash lawyer who is methodically taking apart a slew of regulations and agreements affecting a range of issues, from manufacturing operations to landfills.” (06/02/17)

Need to Know Network: Pruitt promises to put states back in the driver’s seat on regulations. “Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will.” (05/11/17)

The Hill: EPA seeks governors’ input in rewriting Obama water rule. “‘EPA is restoring states’ important role in the regulation of water,’ Pruitt said in a statement. ‘Like President Trump, I believe that we need to work with our state governments to understand what they think is the best way to protect their waters, and what actions they are already taking to do so. We want to return to a regulatory partnership, rather than regulate by executive fiat.’” (05/09/17)

The Washington Examiner: EPA Head Pruitt: We hear East Chicago’s concerns ‘loud and clear.’ “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited East Chicago on Wednesday to assure residents, state and local leaders that Washington is meeting its commitments to protect citizens from lead contamination. ‘Their concerns were heard loud and clear, and I am committed to ensuring that the EPA works with our federal, state and local partners to find solutions that protect the health and safety of East Chicago,’ Pruitt said.” (04/19/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Scott Pruitt’s Back-to-Basics Agenda for the EPA. “You might call him an EPA originalist... When Mr. Pruitt sat down Thursday for his first interview since his November nomination, he spent most of the time waxing enthusiastic about all the good his

agency can accomplish once he refocuses it on its statutorily defined mission: working cooperatively with the states to improve water and air quality.” (02/17/17)

NATIONAL RADIO & PODCAST

The Daily Signal Podcast: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt explains how the Agency has changed under President Trump’s leadership. “The weaponization of the Environmental Protection agency is over,” says Administrator Scott Pruitt.” (02/26/18)

The New York Times’ ‘The Daily:’ Pruitt discusses how he’s focused on protecting the environment and human health. “The role of a regulator is to make things regular. To take a statue, to use its authority, to fairly enforce it.” (02/02/18)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on ‘so called’ Clean Power Plan. “For the first time ever, the EPA took its authority and said we can dictate, really coerce states and utility companies across the country and tell them how to generate electricity. You know, when you look at how we generate electricity in this country, we obviously use multiple energy sources.” (10/11/17)

ABC News “Powerhouse Politics Podcast:” Scott Pruitt talks about Hurricane Irma recovery efforts. “There’s many issues, from drinking water to Superfund to debris management and landfills, that we’re dealing with in this kind of situation.” (09/08/17)

Fox News’ Brian Kilmeade Show: EPA Chairman Scott Pruitt on potential ramifications of pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement. “We are leading the world now, we are at pre-1994 levels with our CO-2 footprint, not because of Paris, not because of a government mandate but because of innovation and technology. For those who say we are going to lose our seat at the table, we are the United States, we don’t lose our seat at the table.” (05/19/17)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on new direction for science boards at the EPA. “You know, Hugh, as you know, the board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. And what’s really been emphasized by Congress as I went through the confirmation process is geographical representation, because you want to ensure as you’re dealing with rulemaking – air, water, whatever rulemaking we’re doing, that the geographical uniqueness of our country as we’re patching rules is taken in consideration.” (05/11/17)

REGIONAL MEDIA

Reno KRNVT-TV: Pruitt discusses his visit to Nevada. “Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt sat down with News 4’s Bill Frankmore on Monday morning to discuss his event with Governor Brian Sandoval at Anaconda Mine in Lyon County regarding future clean-up and his visit with miners at Coeur Rochester Mine in Lovelock.” (02/05/18)

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Pruitt outlined his course of action to cleanup West Lake. “In a long-awaited decision that appears to be a compromise, the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday recommended partial excavation of the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton to remove radioactive waste linked to the Manhattan Project.” (02/01/18)

St. Louis KMOX-TV: Just Moms STL was happy with Pruitt’s decision regarding West Lake. “Dawn Chapman and Karen Nickel of the Just Moms STL advocacy group say at first, the

group was worried a partial removal would mean only 5percent removed. With a 70percent or more removal — they are pleased. 'I can tell you that we are happy with this decision, and what this does for us is it gives us direction,' Nickel says. 'We've gone without a decision at the site for 10 years, and it's time that we have direction.'" (02/01/18)

Cedar Rapids Gazette: Pruitt wants to work hand in hand with states. "What's important for us in Washington, D.C., to do is to learn and partner and work with folks at the state level to achieve good outcomes together. That just simply has not happened for a number of years,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, during a stop in Nevada." (12/01/17)

Des Moines Register: Pruitt called farmers the first “conservationists, environmentalists.” "Pruitt said the country needed to discuss what 'true environmentalism' means: 'We have been blessed with a bounty of natural resources. And some view that as 'We should simply not use them' — that we should put up fences and not use our natural resources. 'I don't buy that. We, as a country, have an obligation to feed the world and power the world,' he said, getting applause. 'When you have the natural resources like we do, we should use them to benefit our neighbors, our country and world.'" (12/01/17)

Louisville WHAS-TV: Pruitt will have changes to Obama's WOTUS. "The head of the United States Environmental Protection Agency was in Louisville Thursday with a promise of change to one of the most controversial environmental regulations for Kentucky farmers. Administrator Scott Pruitt told the Kentucky Farm Bureau's 98th Annual Meeting that the "Waters of the United States" regulation will be changed forever by mid-2018." (12/01/17)

The Chicago Tribune: Pruitt orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup. "We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement. The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning." (10/18/17)

The Clarion Ledger: Pruitt addressed energy issues in Mississippi. "U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Mississippi Thursday to discuss proposed changes to the Waters of the United States rule, just days after announcing the repeal of the Clean Power Plan." (10/13/17)

Houston Chronicle: After Harvey, Pruitt vows bold response to polluted sites around Houston. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, who has visited Texas twice since Hurricane Harvey, vowed Thursday to have 'an answer' by next month for a permanent solution to clean up the San Jacinto River Waste Pits." (09/22/17)

Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA chief, a former baseball exec, wants ‘world, world series.’ "I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We've seen it in other instances and I think that's an opportunity that we need to be pursuing." (08/14/17)

Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA Head Agrees That Des Moines Superfund Site Needs to Develop, But When? "Political Director Dave Price talked to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt about efforts to redevelop superfund sites, like Des Moines, all over the country." (08/08/17)

Radio Iowa: Pruitt visits Iowa to discuss WOTUS. “Pruitt said his goal is to provide ‘regulatory clarity’ with a new rule, so property owners will know where federal jurisdiction begins and ends. ‘If you want to build a pond on your land,’ Pruitt said, ‘if you have natural springs on your land and you want to want to water your livestock and build (a retention) pond...and you’re not really sure whether if you do that you’re going to be subject to \$37,000-plus a day in fines if you don’t get a permit and you find it out five years from now, what does that mean? You don’t build the pond or you don’t build the subdivision or you don’t use your land the way you want.’” (08/08/17)

Denver KDVR-TV: Pruitt Gold King Mine on 2-Year Anniversary of Spill Caused by Agency. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt and Colorado leaders will tour the site of the Gold King mine spill on Friday to mark the second anniversary of the spill that dumped 3 million gallons of tainted wastewater into the Animas River.” (08/04/17)

Arkansas Democrat Gazette: Pruitt discusses WOTUS in Arkansas. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited with Arkansas Cabinet officials and agriculture representatives Thursday about changes they would like to see made to the nation’s definition of protected water bodies.” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star Tribune: Pruitt Signals Welcome Support for Great Lakes Restoration Project. “Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Scott Pruitt’s visit to Minnesota last week yielded an unexpected boon for those who care about clean water. In an interview with a Star Tribune reporter, Pruitt affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior.” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star-Tribune: Pruitt is working hard to protect the Great Lakes. “Scott Pruitt, the nation’s top environmental officer, said Wednesday he endorses continued federal funding for a landmark cleanup of the Great Lakes... ‘It’s a continuing need, and we have to see that it’s adequately funded.’” (07/20/17)

Twin Cities WCCO-TV: Pruitt gave an in-depth interview about the EPA’s Back-To-Basics Agenda. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was in studio for an exclusive interview while he was in the state to meet with Gov. Mark Dayton. He’s in Minnesota as part of his Back-To-Basics tour and talked about rolling back regulations.” (07/19/17)

Deseret News: Pruitt visited Utah and talked about WOTUS. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Utah as part of multistate tour to get input on how the agency can be more responsive to states’ needs in general and in specific how the controversial Waters of the United States rule should be retooled.” (07/18/17)

Salt Lake City KTVX-TV: Pruitt discusses his Back-To-Basics agenda. “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt made his first stop on the State Action Tour here in Utah. This morning he sat down with Glen Mills on Good Morning Utah exclusively to talk about the tour.” (07/18/17)

Tulsa World: EPA Chief Scott Pruitt says he’s ‘determined to prioritize Superfund cleanups.’ “‘It’s important that we address state and tribal rights when protecting the environment and natural resources,’ Pruitt said upon announcement of a new grant awarded the Quapaw Tribe.” (05/31/17)

Tulsa World: EPA’s Pruitt: Agency is ‘doing what it’s supposed to do’ at Osage pollution

site. ““This is just leadership,” Pruitt said. “It’s our agency doing what it’s supposed to do, coming in, finding out what the source of the problem is, getting it corrected.” (05/28/17)

Minot Daily News: Governor Burgum says Pruitt is good for North Dakota. “Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota. Pruitt, an attorney, is a Republican politician from Oklahoma. He has been a leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda, including suing the EPA to block its Clean Power Plan and Waters of the United States rule.” (05/01/17)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com
Sent: Fri 11/17/2017 4:13:52 PM
Subject: Re:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post. Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... “Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA’s criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest

literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [<mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

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Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Fri 4/13/2018 8:16:03 PM
Subject: Afternoon Energy, presented by the American Petroleum Institute: Environmentalists win again — Pruitt report card coming — API tells Trump to not bail out FirstEnergy

By Garrett Ross and David Beavers | 04/13/2018 04:14 PM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff

ENVIRONMENTALISTS WIN AGAIN: The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled Thursday that gasoline spilled from a Kinder Morgan Energy Partners pipeline in South Carolina that traveled through groundwater to reach nearby streams was a violation of the Clean Water Act, Pro's Annie Snider reports. The decision marks a second victory for environmentalists this year, going further than a February ruling from the 9th Circuit on the same issue.

Kinder Morgan did not dispute that it was the source of the pollution, but argued that it wasn't a violation of the Clean Water Act since the 1972 law considers unauthorized pollution discharges to be a violation only if there is an ongoing discharge from a point source, and the pipeline had long since been repaired. The court disagreed, finding that indirect discharges like those continuing from an underground gasoline plume associated with the pipeline leak are also covered by the federal water law.

"If the presence of a short distance of soil and groundwater were enough to defeat a claim, polluters easily could avoid liability under the CWA by ensuring that all discharges pass through soil and groundwater before reaching navigable waters. Such an outcome would greatly undermine the purpose of the Act," Judge Barbara Keenan, an Obama appointee, wrote for the majority.

As similar cases largely focused on leaking coal ash ponds crop up around the country, the EPA has asked for public comment on whether it should create a formal policy on the issue of pollution traveling through groundwater. Read more from Annie [here](#).

Welcome to Afternoon Energy! We're your hosts Garrett Ross and David Beavers. Send suggestions, news and tips to gross@politico.com, dbeavers@politico.com, mdaily@politico.com and njuliano@politico.com, and keep up with us on Twitter at [@garrett_ross](https://twitter.com/garrett_ross), [@davidabeavers](https://twitter.com/davidabeavers), [@dailym1](https://twitter.com/dailym1), [@nickjuliano](https://twitter.com/nickjuliano), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

PRUITT REPORT CARD COMING: EPA's inspector general will release an interim report Monday afternoon related to its probe of whether Administrator Scott Pruitt misused the special hiring authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The audit [began in January](#), and focuses on Pruitt's use of the special hiring authority to bring on more than a dozen political staffers who were not subject to typical federal hiring restrictions or the Trump administration's ethics pledge. The scope of the interim report was not yet clear, but it could include urgent information the IG thinks Pruitt needs to know about before the audit is completely finished. Also unclear is whether the IG has expanded that existing probe to include a

recent controversy around EPA's use of the SDWA authority to grant raises to two Pruitt aides. Read more from Alex [here](#).

**** A message from the American Petroleum Institute:** Safe energy exploration and development in the Outer Continental Shelf could bring significant jobs, investments, and state revenue for public education and infrastructure to coastal states and across the nation, as well as strengthen our national security. Recently released studies highlight the potential economic benefits here: <http://bit.ly/2FPgybN> **

SHIPPING EMISSIONS SET TO FALL: The U.N.'s shipping regulator agreed to a deal today to cut the sector's emissions in half by 2050, despite opposition from the U.S., POLITICO Europe's Sara Stefanini reports. The fragile compromise pits Europe and small island nations against the U.S., Saudi Arabia, India, Brazil and Iran, among other dissenters. The shipping industry largely cheered the deal. Read more from Sara [here](#).

API TELLS TRUMP TO NOT BAIL OUT FIRSTENERGY: The largest natural gas and oil industry trade association fervently wishes President Donald Trump let's FirstEnergy Solutions' power plants go gently into that good night. With Trump pushing Energy Secretary Rick Perry to find a way to bail out the plants, API sent a [letter](#) to Trump today urging him not to use his emergency authority to prop up coal and nuclear generators. "API urges you and DOE to defend the ability of customers to enjoy the economic benefits delivered to consumers while ensuring the reliable and resilient operation of the grid while achieving your policy goals," API CEO Jack Gerard wrote. "The benefits that reverberate through the natural gas and oil supply chain are tremendous and should not be jeopardized."

OCTANE V. RFS: Higher octane fuels may not be enough to find common ground between oil refiners and ethanol producers in their long-running fight over the future of the Renewable Fuel Standard. A national octane standard could be an avenue for getting more ethanol into gasoline — ethanol is a natural source of octane, which improves engine performance — and it's one of the options under discussion for an overhaul of the Renewable Fuel Standard. Advocates on both sides of the fight grappled with the octane issue during a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing today, but remained at an impasse over the program itself.

Chet Thompson, CEO of the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, told a House subcommittee that setting an octane standard at 95 — regular unleaded is usually around 87 or 88 — could be beneficial "if done correctly—with a sunset of the RFS, a reasonable phase-in and robust market competition." But Emily Skor, CEO of Growth Energy, said ethanol could help boost octane levels — as long as the biofuels mandate remained. "Only with a stable RFS and with a significant boost in octane, coupled with a midlevel ethanol blend, can these substantial benefits be achieved," she told the environment subcommittee.

BERNHARDT'S LOBBYING TIES: VICE News' Greg Walters reports that David Bernhardt, the No. 2 at Interior, is one of two Trump administration officials who were once registered to lobby for an investment company headed by a Russian-born billionaire in business with associates of President Vladimir Putin. Together, Bernhardt and DOJ antitrust chief Makan Delrahim, another Trump appointee, "registered as lobbyists in 2011 and 2012 for Access

Industries, a holding company controlled by billionaire Leonard Blavatnik, according to public filings reviewed by VICE News." Read more [here](#).

EXXON CASE CONTINUES: Exxon Mobil was rebuffed by the Massachusetts Supreme Court today as it rejected the company's request to halt an investigation into whether the company knowingly concealed the results of its research into climate change, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. [The decision](#) is a setback for the company, which has sought to withhold documents that Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey has requested. A federal judge in New York in late March [threw out](#) a similar case Exxon brought against Healey and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. Read more [here](#).

OIL RIGS UP AGAIN: For the second consecutive week, the U.S. oil rig count is up, Reuters [reports](#), citing the weekly Baker Hughes report. The number of rigs rose by seven to 815 this week, the highest since March 2015, according to Reuters.

SWAMP WATCH: Coal giant Peabody Energy hired a trio of lobbyists at Capitol Tax Partners to lobby on the "impact of tax reform on international mining companies," per a [disclosure filing](#).

QUICK HITS:

- Oil rises, on track for biggest weekly gain since July, [Reuters](#).
- Surging demand for lithium spurs interest in European mines, [The Wall Street Journal](#).
- Toast the vote? Steyer group hosts first Democratic forum in PA, [Roll Call](#).
- New Jersey Takes a Big Step Toward Renewable Energy (and Nuclear Gets Help, for Now), [The New York Times](#).

WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

- Trump may try to claw back [as much as \\$60 billion](#) from spending bill
- GOP [breaks the glass](#) as House outlook darkens
- Freedom Caucus' Jordan weighs [bid for House speaker](#)

**** A message from the American Petroleum Institute:** The oil and natural gas industry supports over 10 million jobs and almost 8 percent of the U.S. GDP. We support common-sense energy policies that promote safe energy development that will advance America's energy and economic future, while strengthening our national security. Recent studies find that opening up the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for U.S. energy exploration and development could bring significant jobs, investments, and state revenue for public education and infrastructure to coastal states and across the nation. Natural gas and oil non-station jobs pay an average salary of \$101,000 with many not requiring college degrees. The Atlantic OCS alone could support 265,000 new jobs, an additional \$20 billion per year in new private investment, and contribute

\$22 billion per year to the U.S. economy. Studies on the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, Pacific, and Alaska found similar benefits to opening up the OCS for offshore development. Read the highlights of the economic impact studies: <http://bit.ly/2FPgybN> **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/afternoon-energy/2018/04/environmentalists-win-again-169949>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

New court ruling says pollution through groundwater needs CWA permit [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 04/13/2018 12:52 PM EDT

In a second victory this year for environmentalists, another appellate court has ruled that pollution from a pipeline or discharge pipe that travels through groundwater and fouls a river or lake is regulated under the Clean Water Act.

The U.S. Court of Appeal for the 4th Circuit ruled Thursday that gasoline spilled from a Kinder Morgan Energy Partners pipeline in South Carolina that traveled through groundwater to reach nearby streams was a violation of the Clean Water Act, even though the spill happened on land, not water, and the pipeline itself was repaired. The decision goes further than a February ruling from the 9th Circuit on the same issue and stands to create a major liability for industries ranging from coal utilities to agricultural producers.

The underground Kinder Morgan pipeline ruptured in late 2014, spilling more than 369,000 gallons of gasoline in Anderson County, S.C. While much of the spill was cleaned up, environmental groups represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center alleged that at least 160,000 gallons remains unrecovered and that pollution continues to seep into two nearby tributaries of the Savannah River.

Kinder Morgan did not dispute that it was the source of the pollution, but argued that it wasn't a violation of the Clean Water Act since the 1972 law considers unauthorized pollution discharges to be a violation only if there is an ongoing discharge from a point source, and the pipeline had long since been repaired.

The court disagreed, finding that indirect discharges like those continuing from Kinder Morgan's underground gasoline plume are also covered by the federal water law.

"If the presence of a short distance of soil and ground water were enough to defeat a claim, polluters easily could avoid liability under the CWA by ensuring that all discharges pass through soil and ground water before reaching navigable waters. Such an outcome would greatly undermine the purpose of the Act," Judge Barbara Keenan, an Obama appointee, wrote for the majority.

Judge Henry Floyd, a George W. Bush appointee, dissented, concurring with Kinder Morgan's

argument that because the pipeline had been repaired, the pollution was no longer coming from a point source and thus wasn't a Clean Water Act violation.

The case was initially dismissed by a district court, but the appellate court on Thursday vacated that ruling and sent the case back for further proceedings.

The new ruling comes on the heels of February's 9th Circuit Court decision that found Maui County to be in violation for injecting wastewater into underground wells that then leaked through groundwater to the Pacific Ocean without a Clean Water Act permit.

In the wake of that decision, and as similar cases largely focused on leaking coal ash ponds crop up around the country, the Trump administration's EPA has [asked](#) for public comment on whether it should create a formal policy on the issue of pollution traveling through groundwater.

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EPA IG to investigate agency hiring [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 01/09/2018 05:51 PM EDT

EPA's inspector general is launching an investigation into the agency's use of a special hiring authority that could have shielded political appointees from the Trump administration's ethics pledge.

The IG's office notified EPA's acting head of the Office of Administration and Resources Management on Monday that it is beginning research on the agency's use of administratively determined positions created under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The law allows the agency to hire as many as 30 employees under expedited procedures.

Democrats have charged that the Trump administration has used this authority to shield political appointees from its ethics pledge, which is more comprehensive than the agency's ethics requirements. They have also asked the GAO to investigate the issue.

Nancy Beck, who was a top expert for the chemicals industry's lobbying group before being appointed deputy assistant administrator for EPA's chemical safety office this spring, was hired under this authority. She has made a number of controversial changes relating to implementation of the Toxic Substances Control Act. EPA's senior ethics counsel told POLITICO in a statement last summer that she did not need an ethics recusal to do so, even though she had been heavily involved with the issue in her previous job.

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EPA watchdog to release interim report on Pruitt's hiring practices [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 04/13/2018 02:51 PM EDT

EPA's inspector general will release an interim report Monday afternoon related to its probe of whether Administrator Scott Pruitt misused the special hiring authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the IG's office announced today.

The audit [began in January](#), and focuses on Pruitt's use of the special hiring authority to bring on more than a dozen political staffers who were not subject to typical federal hiring restrictions or the Trump administration's ethics pledge.

Among the so-called administratively determined hires are Nancy Beck, a former expert for the American Chemistry Council who is the new deputy assistant administrator in EPA's chemical office, as well as Lee Forsgren, the deputy in EPA's water office, and several public affairs staffers. Some of these hires have since transitioned to formal political appointees.

The scope of the interim report was not yet clear, but it could include urgent information the IG thinks Pruitt needs to know about before the audit is completely finished.

Also unclear is whether the IG has expanded that existing probe to include a recent controversy around EPA's use of the SDWA authority to grant raises to two Pruitt aides. Those raises had been originally rejected by the White House, and Pruitt has denied any knowledge of them before they were reported. Democrats last week [asked](#) the IG to include that matter in its ongoing audit.

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Global shipping to at least halve its emissions by 2050 [Back](#)

By Sara Stefanini | 04/13/2018 11:54 AM EDT

LONDON — The U.N. shipping regulator clinched a deal today to cut the sector's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent by mid-century — a fragile compromise that [deeply split the EU and the U.S.](#)

The U.S., Saudi Arabia, India, Brazil, Iran, the Philippines and Cyprus were among the dissenters, calling to further weaken the target agreed in the International Maritime Organization.

Europeans, small island states and others instead expressed disappointment that it wasn't higher, but did accept the compromise.

The draft climate strategy, due to be finalized in 2023, aims to peak emissions from shipping as soon as possible and halve them by 2050, compared to 2008 levels. But it leaves open the door for much bigger cuts by calling to pursue a full phase-out.

It also aims to reduce emissions per each ton of cargo shipped by at least 40 percent by 2030 and pursue efforts toward 70 percent by 2050, and calls to review the IMO's energy efficiency design rules for ships with a view to tightening them.

The shipping industry broadly cheered the agreed strategy as a sufficient signal for cleaner fuels and other changes.

"The 50 percent cut is an incredibly ambitious objective, and it can only be realistically achieved with the development and roll-out of zero-carbon fuels," said Simon Bennett, deputy secretary-general of the International Chamber of Shipping.

That means that once the industry has enough clean fuel to reach that goal, full decarbonization will be in reach, he said.

This article first appeared on [POLITICO.EU](#) on April 13, 2018.

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Massachusetts Supreme Court rejects Exxon bid to halt climate investigation [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 04/13/2018 02:20 PM EDT

The Massachusetts Supreme Court today denied Exxon Mobil's appeal to halt an investigation into whether the company knowingly concealed the results of its research into climate change, according to a [court filing](#).

The decision is a set-back for the company, which has sought to withhold documents that Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey has requested. The court ruled against Exxon's claims that Healey's office had no jurisdiction over the oil giant and was biased against the company.

A federal judge in New York in late March [threw out](#) a similar case Exxon brought against Healey and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

"For the second time this month, Exxon's scorched earth campaign to block our investigation has been entirely rejected by the courts," Healey's office said in a press release. "In its decision today, our state's highest court affirmed that Exxon is subject to our laws, and that our office has the authority to investigate. "

Exxon spokesman did not immediately reply to questions.

Healey and Schneiderman have alleged Exxon misled investors by not making public internal company research on how climate change could impact demand for fossil fuels. Exxon has said the investigation is spurred by politics and it had priced climate change into its business model.

WHAT'S NEXT: Exxon must comply with Healey's request for more documents.

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Trump may try to claw back as much as \$60 billion from spending bill [Back](#)

By Nancy Cook and Matthew Nussbaum | 04/13/2018 05:01 AM EDT

The White House is ignoring warnings from worried Hill Republicans and moving ahead with plans to cut billions of dollars from the massive spending bill that Congress passed in late March, after President Donald Trump has spent weeks grouching about the legislation.

Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney — himself a former congressman — is taking the lead on developing the rollback proposal, according to eight current and former administration officials and Republicans close to the White House. The White House expects to release it around May 1, according to one administration official.

These officials anticipate the White House could propose slashing anywhere from \$30 billion to \$60 billion dollars from the \$1.3 trillion dollar spending bill passed for this year — even as Republican lawmakers are openly asking the president not to re-open the negotiations.

"The president is frustrated with omnibus. I also know that his base is frustrated with the omnibus," said Paul Winfree, who served as Trump's director of budget policy and deputy director of the Domestic Policy Council until he resigned in December to return to The Heritage Foundation. "The main question is: How big will they go?"

The White House has not reached the point yet of circulating a list of areas to cut — though administration officials and congressional aides anticipate the suggestions will involve cuts to foreign aid and nondiscretionary domestic programs targeted in the president's recent budget.

In a statement, Mulvaney said the administration "will work with like-minded partners on Capitol Hill to see how we can reduce wasteful Washington spending within the law."

Aiding Mulvaney is House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who is vying to replace Rep. Paul Ryan as he retires from his leadership position as speaker of the House. But Rep. Steve Scalise, the House majority whip, is also interested in the job — potentially complicating the process of

trying to cut money from the spending bill, as both men try to curry favor with the president and within their own caucus. Any cuts would also have to pass muster in the Senate, where Republicans hold a 51-49 majority.

Even after Congress passed the spending package, narrowly averting a third shutdown this year, Trump surprised aides by threatening to veto it at the last minute over its increase in domestic spending, which he derided as "a waste of money."

One administration official said the omnibus bill remained on the president's mind because he views it as another instance of Washington working in a predictable, dysfunctional way, with lawmakers promising to cut spending, build a border wall, or repeal Obamacare, only to do nothing in the end.

Some Republicans have preemptively warned the White House not to try to re-open the omnibus bill. House Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) said it would amount to Trump going back on his word and veteran appropriator Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) told POLITICO the idea is "unrealistic and dangerous."

White House officials stressed that Trump was not the first president to attempt such retroactive cuts under a 1974 law that allows the president to propose to Congress rescinding certain budget authority. Congress then has 45 days to pass a law codifying the cuts, known as rescissions, or the spending remains in effect.

"Many presidents have used rescission authority," said White House legislative affairs director Marc Short. "Even Bill Clinton used it multiple times and I think it's a perfectly appropriate mechanism for the executive branch to send back to Congress opportunities to save taxpayer dollars."

Short nevertheless said that rescissions are not a long-term solution to the problem of massive spending bills.

"What we've always been asking is for Congress to do its job and to complete appropriations bills on time," Short said. "When they don't, you're left in a position where the president is asked to sign a giant omnibus or shut down the government. One way to fix this is for Congress to actually have a normal appropriations process."

The House typically passes appropriations bills, but appropriations legislation usually can't get passed on the Senate floor, where Democrats have enough votes to block bills. The White House expects the new Senate appropriations chairman, Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), to work with Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to change that, although Republicans' slim majority makes it unlikely.

Trump has threatened not to support another omnibus going forward. "I will never sign another bill like this again," Trump said shortly after signing the omnibus in March. "I'm not going to do it again. Nobody read it. It's only hours old. Some people don't even know what is in — \$1.3 trillion — it's the second largest ever."

His criticisms, levied hours after he issued his veto threat, echoed those that Democrats and Republicans alike regularly lob at omnibus spending bills, which contain all the discretionary funding for the government in one piece of legislation, as opposed to the 12 separate bills that the appropriations process calls for.

But, with Democrats uninterested in working with Republicans ahead of the midterms, the regular appropriations process likely won't work this year, either. Congress is expected to pass a continuing resolution, maintaining current funding levels, by the next deadline on Sept. 30, 2018. That bill will almost certainly fund the government through the 2018 midterms.

"Theoretically, the Congress should be able to pass individual spending bills and I imagine the House, if not all of them, will pass a good chunk of them. However there's the Senate and the Dems over in the Senate are going to do the same thing they did in this situation," said a senior GOP Hill aide. "They have more leverage when you do an omnibus. Not to mention they could take the House and try to push any spending bill into the new year."

"Is he never going to sign an omnibus again? I find that very unlikely," the aide added. "And frankly, you know, the terms are not going to be as good if the Dems control at least one of the chambers. They're going to have even more leverage than they have now."

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GOP breaks the glass as House outlook darkens [Back](#)

By Alex Isenstadt | 04/13/2018 05:00 AM EDT

Republicans are rushing to shore up congressional seats deep in the heart of Trump country as they come to an alarming realization: In this midterm election, few GOP lawmakers are safe.

GOP leaders are pressing Republican lawmakers in conservative areas to get their sluggish campaigns in order. They're pleading with major donors to open their wallets for incumbents in seats previously thought to be secure. And they're polling districts President Donald Trump won comfortably just a year and a half ago, searching for signs of trouble.

While most of the party's efforts have been focused on defending swing districts, Republicans are increasingly turning their attention to more conservative areas, from suburban Phoenix to rural Virginia, fearful that they too could be casualties of a midterm bloodbath.

Party officials say they've learned the lessons Democrats failed to heed during the 2010 House GOP takeover. [That year](#), a number of Democratic-held seats once thought to be safe became endangered just before the election, giving the national party little time to mount a rescue campaign.

"In a year like this, every Republican is vulnerable. If you don't take your race seriously, you'll probably lose," said Robert Blizzard, a veteran Republican pollster who's working on a number of congressional races. "The Democratic enthusiasm is no joke. They're coming to the polls in November no matter what. Don't run a strong campaign at your own potential peril."

Republicans are racing to lock down an upcoming special election in a deep-red Arizona district that Trump won by 21 percentage points. After losing in a conservative Pennsylvania district last month, the national party poured over \$400,000 into the suburban Phoenix seat.

The contest is provoking angst in GOP circles: During a conference call with Republican National Committee and Arizona Republican Party officials last week, White House aides expressed concern about the party's volunteer efforts in the race.

GOP officials are confident that Republican nominee Debbie Lesko will ultimately survive the April 24 election, though the party is taking no chances. Next week, Republican leaders will mount a double-barreled offensive to pull her over the finish line, with House Speaker Paul Ryan holding a Capitol Hill fundraiser for Lesko and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy flying out to the district on her behalf.

The intervention effort was underway even before Republicans were gobsmacked by Ryan's retirement announcement this week, a development that threatens to suppress their fundraising. McCarthy has been urging a range of members to get their campaigns in shape and not rely on outside super PACs.

And earlier this year, National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Steve Stivers (R-Ohio) met one-on-one with all 43 House Republicans who were outraised by Democratic opponents during the fourth quarter of 2017.

At the committee's Capitol Hill headquarters, staffers have begun referring to members like Illinois Rep. Randy Hultgren, Virginia Rep. Tom Garrett and North Carolina Rep. Ted Budd — who also won reelection in 2016 by double digits — as "the foundation." In other words, the lawmakers whose fate will determine whether Republicans save their majority.

Over the past few weeks, the pro-House GOP Congressional Leadership Fund super PAC has conducted surveys in the districts of three conservative House Freedom Caucus members — Garrett, Budd and Virginia Rep. Dave Brat.

It also polled the races of two North Carolina Republicans, Reps. Robert Pittenger and George Holding, both of whom won by double digits in 2016. Their House districts are among 50 the super PAC has surveyed.

Those familiar with the polling say none of the five members are in imminent danger of losing. Yet some are sounding the alarm.

On Monday, veteran GOP pollster John McLaughlin, who advised Trump's 2016 campaign,

delivered a presentation to Florida Republican legislators in which he warned that the party was failing to invigorate the president's supporters. He said many Trump voters were likely sit out the midterms, a dynamic that could endanger lawmakers in conservative areas.

At one point, McLaughlin showed a slide highlighting the Republican drop-off in special elections since the start of the 2018 cycle and noting that Democrats had improved their performance by 14 percentage points on average.

"Republicans are losing elections because they don't understand and are not appealing to Trump voters, and Trump voters are staying home because the Republican establishment has no clue how to get them out," McLaughlin said in an interview.

Party officials are particularly concerned about members who've failed to fill their fundraising coffers. In North Carolina, Pittenger has been outraised by his Democratic opponent, Iraq War veteran Dan McCready. On Tuesday, McCarthy held an event for Pittenger in the state that raised over \$160,000.

In Virginia, Garrett and Brat have posted subpar totals, raising concerns among party leaders, who are rushing to help them build their war chests. Next month, House Majority Whip Steve Scalise will headline a "Breakfast with Brat" event benefiting the conservative congressman.

"Unfortunately, in Garrett and Brat's case, neither congressman has done what they need to do from a fundraising perspective," said Chris LaCivita, a longtime Virginia-based Republican strategist. "From a fundraising standpoint they have made their races attractive to Democrats."

In some states, the GOP is racing to build political infrastructure for lawmakers who previously needed little help from the national party. Congressional Leadership Fund has opened a field office devoted to boosting Washington Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, the House GOP Conference chairwoman who's won her past five reelection bids with at least 60 percent of the vote.

The RNC has established an elaborate field program in North Carolina, where Holden, Budd and Pittenger are running — and where there are otherwise few voter turnout mechanisms in place. With North Carolina in a "blue moon" election cycle, meaning that there are no statewide races on the ballot other than Supreme Court contests, the committee has dispatched six full-time field staffers to the state.

National GOP officials and local operatives have been holding regular breakfast meetings to coordinate their efforts.

"It's the first time I've witnessed the national party coming and building that kind of infrastructure during a blue-moon election cycle," said Paul Shumaker, a veteran North Carolina-based GOP strategist who's working on several congressional races in the state.

Ryan, meanwhile, has made a pet project of reelecting fellow Wisconsin Rep. Glenn Grothman, who represents a district that Trump won by 17 percentage points. Earlier this year, Ryan's

political team helped to establish a joint fundraising committee aimed at helping Grothman raise national funds. The speaker is also expected to hit the trail for Grothman, a second-term lawmaker who's facing a challenge from Dan Kohl, the nephew of former Democratic Sen. Herb Kohl.

And in February, Ryan called into the annual Las Vegas board meeting of the Republican Jewish Coalition, a group funded in part by billionaire donor Sheldon Adelson, to urge givers to pony up for Grothman.

Another part of the GOP's effort involves persuading red-district lawmakers to seek reelection, something with which leaders have had mixed success. In January, when Florida Rep. Dennis Ross told Stivers that he was considering retirement, the House GOP campaign chief urged him to run again.

Ross announced this week that he'd be stepping aside after four terms.

On Wednesday, following news of Ryan's retirement, Stivers spoke with several other members and asked them whether they'd be running again. They assured him they were.

How much success Republicans have at protecting conservative districts could come down to how much money they have. Billionaire hedge fund manager Paul Singer, one of the GOP's most influential and prolific contributors, will host a retreat this weekend in Chicago that is expected to draw a number of the party's biggest givers.

Among the topics likely to be addressed at the conference, which was scheduled prior to Ryan's announcement, is how to allocate funds in the midterms.

Some Republicans, however, contend that the biggest concern isn't donors — it's unprepared lawmakers failing to realize the danger they face.

Congressional "majorities aren't made by the races that are targeted the whole cycle. They are made by open seats and unprepared members in Republican-leaning seats where members are unprepared," said Jeff Burton, a former top NRCC official.

"They will go home in August and finally realize what the environment looks like," he added, "and by that time, it's almost too late."

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Jordan fires warning shot at McCarthy [Back](#)

By Rachael Bade and Kyle Cheney | 04/13/2018 10:34 AM EDT

Conservative firebrand Rep. Jim Jordan's step toward a long-shot bid for House speaker Friday was most notable for the stern warning it delivered to the top contender for the post, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy: You don't have the votes yet.

The House Freedom Caucus founder and his allies know he's unlikely to ever garner the 218 votes needed to win the gavel. But Jordan's declaration is likely less about winning than leverage.

The North Carolina Republican could easily rally several dozen conservatives to support him, blocking any other candidate — including McCarthy — from becoming speaker. Jordan could then use their votes to extract concessions from whoever is seeking the position, in this case, likely McCarthy.

A campaign for speaker, in other words, could make Jordan a kingmaker even if he fails.

"They're putting a marker down and saying, 'You have to deal with me,'" said one Republican lawmaker who asked not to be named.

It is unclear what the Freedom Caucus — the group that forced out ex-Speaker John Boehner and has long tormented leadership — wants from McCarthy. The group has complained in the past about not receiving chairmanships or plum committee assignments.

Jordan is next in line to chair the House Oversight Committee. Leadership has skipped over him in previous years, but Jordan could angle for the position now.

But Jordan and conservatives might have their sights set higher than a chairmanship, according to one conservative source close with Jordan. The person suggested it could be an effort to get him into leadership, even as majority leader. Some conservatives have also discussed creating a new leadership position filled by a member from the far right, creating more of a coalition government that would give the group more influence over the conference's decision-making process.

Either way, Jordan presents a problem for McCarthy. He's a darling of conservatives around the country and would almost certainly win endorsements from conservative media leaders like Sean Hannity, whom Trump watches frequently.

Beyond that, the former wrestling champion is one of the most vocal proponents of Trump's agenda. For the next six months, Republicans will be watching him and McCarthy — as well as a third possible Ryan successor, Steve Scalise (R-La.) — and asking: Who is the best salesman for the Trump agenda?

"We haven't got the border security wall done. We haven't done welfare reform. We need to make the tax cuts permanent. We still need to deal with Obamacare," Jordan said in a Friday interview, a jab at the inability of current leadership to deliver on those GOP campaign promises. "Those are the things we got to focus on."

The situation is déjà vu for McCarthy. When he sought the speakership in 2015, the Freedom Caucus withheld its support and tried to extract concessions to empower the group. But McCarthy, who's long butted heads with Jordan, refused their offer, ultimately withdrawing his bid for speaker when he couldn't win their votes. That paved the way for Ryan.

This time around, McCarthy has been trying to woo the group by embracing more conservative positions. He's backing a plan to cut billions of dollars from a recent spending package as well as calls for a special counsel to investigate Hillary Clinton, an idea leadership scoffed at until recently.

But in light of Jordan's interest, first reported by The Washington Post, it's unclear whether McCarthy's courtship is working.

"Look, there is no speaker race; Paul Ryan's the speaker. If and when there is, I have been encouraged by colleagues to consider that, so I'm open to that," Jordan said.

Jordan was the first chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, which has perfected the strategy of rallying conservatives to hold back their votes until they secure concessions from leadership. That created a constant headache for Boehner and, more recently, Ryan — and animosity among other Republicans.

Indeed, most House Republicans dislike Jordan, viewing him as the ringleader of Freedom Caucus efforts to thwart a number of more moderate GOP policy victories that conservatives saw as too accommodating.

That's why multiple House Republicans chuckled when asked about the prospect of a "Speaker Jordan," as they walked into a Friday vote. Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) laughed and said "I'm not a Freedom Caucus guy." Others just rolled their eyes.

"I appreciate the principle of conservative leadership that he has demonstrated, but at times some of the tactics have rubbed some of the members in a concerning way, and that would be difficult to overcome," said Rep. Tom Reed (R-N.Y.).

Jordan has previously weighed a bid for speaker as a means to an end. As [POLITICO reported](#) in 2016, conservatives were considering trying to push Ryan out of the job because he criticized Trump as the GOP nominee.

Jordan knew he couldn't win back then, conservative sources told POLITICO. But he also knew he could likely grab enough votes to keep Ryan from reelection to the speakership and make him step aside. In the end, Trump threw Ryan a lifeline, embracing him to lead the conference despite their differences, and Jordan backed down.

Freedom Caucus members were coy early Friday about Jordan's intentions this time around. Rep. David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) said the debate over the next speaker should be "a discussion about policy" rather than about a specific person.

"Some of us are going to say, 'Jim, you've still got to put it on paper and deliver it just like everyone else does,'" Schweikert said of Jordan's policy vision.

To others, it's crucial for someone who embraces the group's positions to be on the ballot.

"Not everybody up here is committed to keep their promise to constituents, so it's only natural that we would want to find a leader that will help us keep our promises," said Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-Texas). "So naturally, we're going to talk about somebody in our group."

But could a member of the divisive group actually win a speakership fight?

"Anything is possible, and it's amazing what you can do if you're committed enough," Gohmert said. "You can even bring down a solidified speaker."

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[The Hill - Pruitt to restrict the use of data to craft EPA regulations](#)

[Politico - Pruitt plans to change EPA policy on scientific studies](#)

[E&E Greenwire - Details lacking as Pruitt attacks 'secret science'](#)

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AP - EPA pledges new plan on contaminant from non-stick coatings

Administrator Pruitt's Travel

Washington Post - Travel costs for EPA chief's security detail topped \$30,000 on Italy trip

The Hill - Cost of Pruitt's Italy trip rises above \$84,000

Reuters - EPA chief's security detail on Italy trip cost \$30,000: document

Politico - Security for Pruitt's Italy trip cost \$31K

AP - New travel costs revealed for EPA head amid ongoing scrutiny

Superfund

Detroit News - Mich. to begin oil refinery cleanup on Muskegon lake

AP - Michigan to begin oil refinery cleanup on Muskegon lake

AP - Feds add a week for comments about Superfund proposal

New Hampshire Public Radio - Seacoast Reps. Sue for Coakley Group Records as Portsmouth Prepares to Release Toxic Waste Documents

EPA Staff

E&E Greenwire - Pruitt aide didn't have to sign Trump ethics pledge

E&E Greenwire - Water chief recuses himself on Pebble, but not Chesapeake Bay

Politico - EPA wants nominees for key air quality advisory panel

Litigation

E&E Greenwire - D.C. Circuit upholds Obama-era haze rule

AP - Company that leases farm land on Navajo agrees to fine

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E&E Daily - Republicans question Pruitt's Pebble commitment

Politico - GOP lawmakers air 'serious concerns' about Pruitt's Pebble decision

Washington Examiner - EPA to hold national summit on chemicals found in drinking water

Bloomberg - Let Pruitt Do It: EPA Rules Rollback Means Fewer Riders on Bill (*Audio)

BNA - Manufacturers Want Clarity on Chemicals EPA Will Scrutinize

BNA - EPA Action on Fuel Chemical in Drinking Water One Step Closer

E&E Daily - Deal elusive with riders, some funding unsettled

Reuters - Trump administration preparing list of possible biofuels tweaks: sources

Washington Post - Bothered by fragrances? This story will be a breath of fresh air.

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Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/03/19/epa-scott-pruitt-secret-science/>

EXCLUSIVE: Scott Pruitt Will End EPA's Use Of 'Secret Science' To Justify Regulations

By Michael Bastasch, 3/19/18, 9:06 PM

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt will soon end his agency's use of "secret science" to craft regulations.

"We need to make sure their data and methodology are published as part of the record," Pruitt said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Caller News Foundation. "Otherwise, it's not transparent. It's not objectively measured, and that's important."

Pruitt will reverse long-standing EPA policy allowing regulators to rely on non-public scientific data in crafting rules. Such studies have been used to justify tens of billions of dollars worth of regulations.

EPA regulators would only be allowed to consider scientific studies that make their data available for public scrutiny under Pruitt's new policy. Also, EPA-funded studies would need to make all their data public.

"When we do contract that science out, sometimes the findings are published; we make that part of our rule-making processes, but then we don't publish the methodology and data that went into those findings because the third party who did the study won't give it to us," Pruitt added.

“And we’ve said that’s fine — we’re changing that as well,” Pruitt told TheDCNF.

Conservatives have long criticized EPA for relying on scientific studies that published their findings but not the underlying data. However, Democrats and environmental activists have challenged past attempts to bring transparency to studies used in rule making.

Texas Republican Rep. Lamar Smith pushed legislation to end the use of what he calls “secret science” at EPA. Pruitt instituted another policy in 2017 backed by Smith against EPA-funded scientists serving on agency advisory boards.

“If we use a third party to engage in scientific review or inquiry, and that’s the basis of rulemaking, you and every American citizen across the country deserve to know what’s the data, what’s the methodology that was used to reach that conclusion that was the underpinning of what — rules that were adopted by this agency,” Pruitt explained.

Pruitt’s pending science transparency policy mirrors Smith’s HONEST Act, which passed the House in March 2017. Smith’s office was pleased to hear Pruitt was adopting another policy the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology chairman championed.

“The chairman has long worked toward a more open and transparent rule-making process at EPA, and he looks forward to any announcement from Administrator Pruitt that would achieve that goal,” committee spokeswoman Thea McDonald told TheDCNF.

Junk science crusader Steve Milloy also called on EPA to end its use of “secret science” in rule making, especially when it comes to studies on the toxicity of fine particulates in the air.

EPA has primarily relied on two 1990s studies linking fine particulate pollution to premature death. Neither studies have made their data public, but EPA used their findings to justify sweeping air quality regulations.

Reported benefits from EPA rules are “mostly attributable to the reduction in public exposure to fine particulate matter,” according to the White House Office of Management and Budget report. That’s equivalent to billions of dollars.

In fact, one of EPA’s most expensive regulation on the books, called MATS, derived most of its estimated benefits from reducing particulates not from reducing mercury, which the rule was ostensibly crafted to address.

EPA estimated MATS would cost \$8.2 billion but yield between \$28 billion to \$77 billion in public health benefits. It’s a similar story for the Clean Power Plan, which EPA estimated would cost \$8.4 billion and yield from \$14 billion to \$34 billion in health and climate benefits.

Democrats and environmentalists have largely opposed attempts to require EPA rely on transparent scientific data. Said data would restrict the amount of studies EPA can use, but a major objection is making data public would reveal confidential patient data, opponents argue.

“A lot of the data that EPA uses to protect public health and ensure that we have clean air and clean water relies on data that cannot be publicly released,” Union of Concerned Scientists representative Yogin Kothari told E&E News.

“It really hamstrings the ability of the EPA to do anything, to fulfill its mission,” Kothari said.

Milloy, however, countered and argued it’s a “red herring” to claim that forcing regulators to use public science data would harm patient privacy.

“The availability of such data sets is nothing new,” said Milloy, publisher of JunkScience.com and senior fellow at the Energy and Environmental Legal Institute.

“The state of California, for example, makes such data available under the moniker, ‘Public Use Death Files,’” Milloy said. “We used such data in the form of over two million anonymized death certificates in our recent California study on particulates and death.”

“Opponents of data transparency are just trying to hide the data from independent scrutiny,” Milloy added. “But the studies that use this data are taxpayer-financed, and they are used to regulate the public.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/379276-pruitt-to-restrict-the-use-of-data-to-craft-epa-regulations>

Pruitt to restrict the use of data to craft EPA regulations

By Timothy Cama, 3/20/18, 9:53 AM

The Trump administration is planning to put new restrictions on the kind of scientific studies and data that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can use to craft its regulations.

The EPA wants to stop using scientific findings whose data and methodologies are not public or cannot be replicated, the Daily Caller reported Tuesday.

It aligns in part with a years-long effort by House Science, Space and Technology Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) to stop the use of “secret science” at the EPA.

Critics have said the effort could hamper the use of health studies for which privacy is a concern,

or external studies for which the EPA does not own the data.

“We need to make sure their data and methodology are published as part of the record,” Pruitt told the Daily Caller. “Otherwise, it’s not transparent. It’s not objectively measured, and that’s important.”

Pruitt said studies completed outside of the EPA could be particularly impacted, but the EPA’s own research might also need to change.

“If we use a third party to engage in scientific review or inquiry, and that’s the basis of rulemaking, you and every American citizen across the country deserve to know what’s the data, what’s the methodology that was used to reach that conclusion that was the underpinning of what — rules that were adopted by this agency,” he told the Daily Caller.

E&E News first reported Pruitt’s intentions Friday, based on a closed-door speech he gave to the conservative Heritage Foundation recently.

Yogin Kothari of the Union of Concerned Scientists said Pruitt’s forthcoming policy is merely an effort to restrict the EPA’s ability to regulate.

“A lot of the data that EPA uses to protect public health and ensure that we have clean air and clean water relies on data that cannot be publicly released,” he told E&E.

“If EPA doesn’t have data to move forward with a public protection for a safeguard, it doesn’t have to do that at all,” Kothari said. “It really hamstringing the ability of the EPA to do anything, to fulfill its mission.”

Smith’s “secret science” legislation consistently passed the House, but ran into veto threats by former President Obama. It also failed to garner the needed 60 votes to pass the Senate.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/pruitt-plans-to-change-epa-policy-on-scientific-studies-843621>

Pruitt plans to change EPA policy on scientific studies

By Alex Guillen, 3/20/18, 10:38 AM

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt plans to change how the agency considers scientific information when writing regulations in a way that likely will exclude certain studies, he told the Daily Caller.

Pruitt told the news site he will reverse longtime agency policy to require that any studies used to support regulations make their raw data available for review and replication by independent scientists.

“We need to make sure their data and methodology are published as part of the record,” Pruitt said. “Otherwise, it’s not transparent. It’s not objectively measured, and that’s important.”

The changes are in line with legislation that House Science Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) has pushed for years, but which was never been passed by the Senate. Democrats, environmentalists and scientific groups have long criticized that legislation as an attempt to cherry-pick data friendly to industry from the voluminous body of epidemiological science. And EPA already releases significant amounts of this data, they said.

CBO said last year the changes “would significantly reduce the number of studies that the agency relies on.” And although EPA said it could make the changes at little to no cost, CBO

estimated it would spend \$5 million from 2018 through 2022. EPA previously told CBO it would have to spend \$250 million a year scrubbing information from thousands of studies "to ensure the transparency of information and data supporting some covered actions."

WHAT'S NEXT: Pruitt did not say when he will issue a formal directive changing EPA's science policy.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076849/search?keyword=EPA>

Details lacking as Pruitt attacks 'secret science'

By Scott Waldman, 3/20/18

U.S. EPA is not releasing details of its plan to make science at the agency more transparent.

EPA will require that data and methodology from studies used to craft regulations be made public. In addition, studies that receive EPA funding must make data public.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox would not release additional information about the plan and referenced Administrator Scott Pruitt's comments to the conservative news organization The Daily Caller. The agency sent that publication the article as a press release but did not otherwise lay out any details.

"We need to make sure their data and methodology are published as part of the record," Pruitt

told the outlet. "Otherwise, it's not transparent. It's not objectively measured, and that's important."

E&E News first reported on the plan to restrict science on Friday (Climatewire, March 16). The plan has long been on the wish list of industry leaders as well as conservative think tanks and lawmakers. It is based on a bill, the "Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment (HONEST) Act" (H.R. 1430), pushed by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), who routinely accuses federal climate scientists of conspiracy and biased results. Smith has been unable to advance his bill through the GOP-controlled Senate.

"If we use a third party to engage in scientific review or inquiry, and that's the basis of rulemaking, you and every American citizen across the country deserve to know what's the data, what's the methodology that was used to reach that conclusion that was the underpinning of what — rules that were adopted by this agency," Pruitt told The Daily Caller.

Critics say Pruitt's efforts are designed to restrict rulemaking at the agency and would prioritize industry research over academic and independent science (Climatewire, March 19). Scientists have pointed out that the data in a number of groundbreaking public health studies may not be available.

In crafting regulations, EPA relies on a wide variety of studies, some of which were conducted decades ago. In some cases, the researchers are now dead. In others, releasing data could violate public health disclosure laws. In addition, gathering data and publicizing it can be an extensive process and one that researchers may not be willing to disclose.

The directive is designed to allow industry researchers a chance to tear down studies, said Bernard Goldstein, dean emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and the Reagan-era EPA assistant administrator for research and development.

"What's going to happen with an 'HONEST Act' approach is that industry will take data out of context," he said. "They will get people who are being paid by industry to nitpick that data, and they will come out and say, 'Aha, they get it all wrong.'"

The danger of the directive is that it could quickly spread to other agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration, where industry is trying to weaken studies that undergird regulations, Goldstein said.

A significant question is whether the agency would apply the directive to regulations now in place or only to new regulations. Career staff at the agency have estimated the cost of implementing the plan could be \$250 million annually for the first few years. Pruitt's EPA has pushed back on that estimate, saying it would be effectively zero and implying that the agency would not take up new regulations.

Publicizing the data in some EPA actions, which often come after years of research, could be extensive. For example, risk assessments for certain chemicals sometimes cite hundreds or even thousands of studies, all of which would have to be tracked down for data collection, according to the EPA career staff analysis of the "HONEST Act." Requiring data transparency would cost hundreds of millions of dollars because it would require EPA staff to track down data from study authors and create an online management system to store and present that data, the analysis found. In addition, EPA staff would have to spend time redacting personally identifiable information in the studies, and study authors would likely require payments for preparing and sending their data, which can take a significant amount of time.

Pruitt is now reviewing the Clean Power Plan, which would restrict pollution from power plants, and the new directive could have significant implications for that rule. In addition, the agency must review the Clean Air Act, which protects the public from air pollution, and the new rule could dramatically limit the research used in that rule.

The new EPA policy is the second science-based initiative Pruitt adapted from bills that Smith, the outgoing chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, could not get passed through Congress. Last year, Pruitt declared that the agency's science advisers could not receive grants from the agency, which restricted a number of academic researchers who were then replaced by industry-friendly scientists.

NJ.com

http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2018/03/how_the_trump_administration_plans_to_clean_up_nj.html

Trump administration plans to force polluters to clean up N.J. Superfund sites

By Jonathan D. Salant, 3/20/18, 8:18 AM

WASHINGTON -- The Environmental Protection Administration plans to step up efforts to get the companies who dumped toxic waste at New Jersey's Superfund sites to pay to clean them up, administrator Scott Pruitt said.

Pruitt on Monday blamed a lack of urgency, not a lack of funding, for the lack of progress in cleaning up the sites. New Jersey has 114 designated Superfund sites, the most in the nation, including three of Pruitt's 21 highest-priority locations.

"I'm going to get accountability with whomever it is on these Superfund sites and we will use every means of enforcement to do so," Pruitt told a group of Washington-based reporters from local news outlets, including NJ Advance Media. "I don't think we've done it as well as we should have historically and we're going to do better going forward."

While President Donald Trump has proposed cutting EPA's budget, Pruitt said the agency will have the money it needs by ensuring that the companies responsible for the contamination clean it up.

"Most of our sites across the country have a responsible party," Pruitt said. "We have very few orphan sites."

The three high-priority sites in New Jersey, again more than any other state, are in Bridgewater, Bergen County and Newark.

"I don't think we've been as aggressive in using our strength and our authority to get accountability at some of these sites and, moreover, to get it done timely," Pruitt said. "The New Jersey sites, we have several of those and we're going to work hard and diligently to get accountability into those areas."

Environmentalists, though, said they're concerned that the EPA won't really force companies to pay to clean up the sites.

"Will he go after them sue them and compel them to clean, or will he just do clean up on paper and just get them off the list," said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. "We think he wants to take them off the list without having the sites cleaned up."

Tittel, who said Pruitt is undercounting the orphan sites, said companies responsible for the pollution fight EPA's efforts to make them pay, and it remains to be seen what the agency will do to force them to open their wallets.

"The responsible parties drag their feet because they don't want to spend a lot of money," Tittel said. "The question becomes: What will they do to make them spend their money?"

The company responsible for some of New Jersey's Superfund sites is Dow Chemical. Dow's senior attorney, Peter Wright, has been nominated to run the EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management, the agency that oversees Superfund cleanups.

Pruitt said that career employees are responsible for determining whether an EPA official must recuse himself from particular projects.

The administrator also called for renewed efforts to replace pipes that are leaching lead into water supplies. A report last year said 300 schools in 95 New Jersey districts had fountains with lead exceeding federal standards.

Pruitt said states and localities, with some federal help, need to borrow money for repairs. Pruitt said Trump's proposed infrastructure plan, which includes \$200 billion in federal funds, could supply some financial assistance, though the plan caps the U.S. share at 20 percent.

"It's going to require investment in infrastructure," Pruitt said. "We know what needs to be done. We need to replace those service lines, corrosion control measures. This is infrastructure at its core. There needs to be an investment made by these states and cities across the country."

The cost of replacing all those lines now leaching lead is \$40 billion to \$45 billion over 10 years, Pruitt said.

"We can truly eradicate lead from our drinking water if we want to invest that kind of money," he said. "It's a clear and present danger to our citizens and we need to act urgently to address it."

Albuquerque Journal

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1148066>

EPA close to settling claims on mine spill

By Michael Coleman, 3/19/18, 11:32 PM

WASHINGTON – Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Monday that the federal government is close to finishing its assessment of roughly 400 claims for financial damages stemming from the 2015 Gold King Mine spill, which dumped toxic chemicals into waters in New Mexico, Colorado and Utah, and final recommendations could be ready by the end of the month.

Former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, an Obama-era appointee, announced toward the end of her tenure in 2016 that the government would not pay any damages to farmers and others harmed by the toxic spill, arguing it was not allowed under the Governmental Tort Claims Act. But after President Donald Trump appointed Pruitt in early 2017, the former Oklahoma attorney general vowed to re-examine the issue.

“We’ve been working diligently since last summer to go through each of those (claims), and we are close to finishing,” Pruitt said in response to a question from the Journal during a meeting with a small group of reporters in his office Monday.

The August 2015 mine spill occurred when a crew hired by the EPA to mitigate leakage from an old mine site accidentally punctured a containment wall, sending a plume of toxic orange waste out of the defunct Gold King Mine, north of Silverton, Colo. The sludge flowed from the Animas River into the San Juan River, which flows into northern New Mexico and to Utah. Claims totaling more than \$1.2 billion have been filed by members of the Navajo Nation and others.

“This agency contributed to a release of toxic materials into the water supply and the Animas River and then walked away,” Pruitt said Monday. “It was a de facto, universal, categorical denial of claims. The defenses that have been deployed under the Governmental Tort Claims Act to deny liability, I don’t think are there based upon the facts I’ve reviewed. I think the people of each of those respective states deserve to have their claims processed and if the (toxic) release caused harm and damages, how much? It’s fair and right for us to deal with those and make a determination.”

Pruitt noted that any claim in excess of \$2,500 must be adjudicated by the Department of Justice, but claims below \$2,500 can be settled directly by the EPA. He said the 400 claims range from “a couple hundred dollars to more than \$10 million.”

About 400 private parties submitted requests for a total \$318 million, according to EPA documents reviewed by The Associated Press. The claims cited lost wages and business income, ruined vacations, property damage, loss of property value and health problems.

“The last I heard is it’s imminent,” Pruitt said of the EPA’s settlement recommendations,

although EPA officials aren't sure when actual payments to claimants could be made. "You've got to determine if it's legitimate or not and then make a decision."

Parties who have filed lawsuits against the EPA in connection with the spill must have their claims adjudicated by the courts, not the EPA.

New Mexico sued the EPA and is seeking at least \$130 million in damages.

Spending investigation

In unrelated news, Pruitt told the Journal he would cooperate with a federal General Accountability Office inquiry into the EPA's spending on a "privacy booth" to secure communications in his office.

On Monday, Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., wrote Pruitt asking him to comply with the inquiry, noting that the GAO sent its first request of several seeking information to the EPA on Dec. 21, 2017, but the EPA has not responded.

Under section 710 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017, the administration can't spend more than \$5,000 to furnish, redecorate, or make improvements to the office of a presidential appointee without first notifying the House and Senate appropriations committees, according to Udall's office. Published reports have said the booth may have cost more than \$43,000.

"I am concerned that the agency may be misleading the committee and the public about the function of the privacy booth while also inappropriately classifying the expense as related to national security in order to avoid proper notification under section 710," Udall, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, wrote to Pruitt. "The American people deserve an open and transparent budget process."

Pruitt told the Journal his office would comply with the GAO inquiry, but he declined to discuss the matter further.

“We’ll provide whatever information is necessary, and we’ll let it speak for that when we send it,” Pruitt said. “We’ll just respond to the GAO and deal with that in due course.”

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076861/search?keyword=EPA>

EPA plans summit on politically toxic nonstick chemicals

By Corbin Hiar, 3/20/18

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has invited governors from every state and territory to a two-day meeting on a class of stain- and water-resistant chemicals after concerns about their health effects sank the nomination of his chemical safety adviser.

The National Leadership Summit, as EPA is referring to it, will take place in Washington on May 22 and 23. Governors or their representatives will share information on ongoing efforts to evaluate and respond to contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

"EPA's leadership summit will bring together stakeholders from across the country to build on the steps we are already taking and to identify immediate actions to protect public health," Pruitt said in a news release. "Through this event, we are providing critical national leadership, while ensuring that our state, tribal, and local partners have the opportunity to help shape our path forward."

Using information gathered at the summit and in state visits that will follow it, EPA plans to develop a "PFAS Management Plan" later this year.

The agency currently has no drinking water standards for PFAS, which have been used since the 1940s to make products like Teflon.

But in May 2016 the agency issued health advisories for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), two types of PFAS that U.S. manufacturers had voluntarily phased out the prior year.

"Studies indicate that exposure to PFOA and PFOS over certain levels may result in adverse health effects," EPA said in a Federal Register notice announcing the advisories. Those include testicular and kidney cancer, liver tissue damage, weakened immune systems and increased cholesterol, and developmental problems like low birth weight, accelerated puberty and skeletal variations, the notice said.

To avoid those dangers, EPA advised federal, state and local officials to keep PFOA and PFOS levels below 70 parts per trillion in drinking water.

The advisory, however, is not legally enforceable.

Partially as a result, there are currently 11 states with "site-specific PFAS challenges and problems," according to EPA: These include Colorado, Delaware, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Vermont and West Virginia.

The biggest PFAS problems have arguably occurred in Hoosick Falls, N.Y., and the Cape Fear River area of North Carolina.

Last year, EPA declared a plastics manufacturing facility in Hoosick Falls a Superfund site, a designation reserved for the nation's most polluted areas. The agency found the Saint-Gobain

Performance Plastics site had contaminated the village's groundwater with dangerous levels of PFOA, trichloroethylene and vinyl chloride (Greenwire, July 31, 2017).

North Carolina regulators are currently battling Chemours Co. over its decision to dump GenX, a newer type of PFAS, into the Cape Fear River.

Dourson derailed by PFAS

The PFAS contamination in New York and North Carolina has already had consequences for Pruitt and EPA.

During the confirmation hearing of Michael Dourson, President Trump's ill-fated pick to lead EPA's chemical safety program, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), pointing to Hoosick Falls community members in attendance, asked him if he would promise not to weaken the drinking water standard for PFOA. He didn't offer any specifics (E&E Daily, Oct. 5, 2017).

Then Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) cited "the current GenX water issues" as one of his reasons for opposing Dourson. Before briefly working as an adviser to Pruitt, the nominee often did industry-funded research on chemicals like GenX that consistently found them to be safer than government standards recommended (Greenwire, Nov. 16, 2017).

Unified Democratic opposition, along with concerns from Burr and fellow North Carolina Republican Sen. Thom Tillis, ultimately derailed Dourson's confirmation for that post.

The chemical industry welcomed the summit but claimed that GenX and other types of PFAS on the market today are safe.

"We are fully supportive of EPA's efforts to closely evaluate these chemicals," said Jessica Bowman, executive director at the FluoroCouncil, a PFAS industry group administered by the broader American Chemistry Council trade association. Chemours is a FluoroCouncil member.

"It is important for everyone to understand that PFAS is a diverse group of chemicals, and the ones that are currently on the market have been thoroughly reviewed by regulators who have relied on a robust body of scientific data supporting the safety of these products for their intended uses," Bowman added. "So we look forward to contributing to this effort and sharing the science-based information on these chemistries with EPA."

AP

<https://apnews.com/837c6f17bbfa4fa292650d1419a01ffd/EPA-pledges-new-plan-on-contaminant-from-non-stick-coatings>

EPA pledges new plan on contaminant from non-stick coatings

3/19/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal environmental regulators say they'll consult with states on managing contamination from a range of long-used non-stick coatings.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Monday it would hold a May summit with state officials. The session will focus on a family of industrial chemicals used for decades in everything from non-stick pans to food wrappers to bags for microwaveable popcorn. The chemicals are known as perfluoralkyls and polyfluoralkyls, or PFAs. Studies now link long-term exposure to the industrial chemicals to increased risks of cancer, hormone changes and other disturbances.

Researchers say water supplies serving millions of Americans show potentially dangerous levels of the contaminants.

The EPA says it will use input from state officials to develop a new management plan for the

chemicals this year.

Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2018/03/20/on-italy-trip-travel-costs-for-epa-chiefs-security-detail-topped-30000/?utm_term=.15a73ad1b12f

Travel costs for EPA chief's security detail topped \$30,000 on Italy trip

By Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis, 3/20/18, 2:59 PM

The travel costs for Scott Pruitt's round-the-clock security detail exceeded \$30,000 during the Environmental Protection Agency administrator's trip to Italy in June, according to documents released by the agency.

The precise breakdown of what Pruitt's security contingent spent on flights and lodging remains unclear because the agency released only a single, almost totally redacted page, showing that the detail's travel expenses for June 5 to 12 came to \$30,553.98. The Environmental Integrity Project, an advocacy group, obtained the records under the Freedom of Information Act.

The latest figures shed new light on how much taxpayers spent to send Pruitt and a coterie of aides to Italy, where they got private tours of the Vatican, met with papal officials and business executives in Rome and briefly attended a conference of environmental ministers in Bologna. The Washington Post previously reported that the trip had cost nearly \$90,000, including \$36,000 for use of a military jet to catch a flight in New York and a \$7,000 premium-class ticket for Pruitt on the transatlantic flight.

The tab for the trip, which also included seven political appointees and two career officials, now appears closer to \$120,000.

“That’s a lot of money for Mr. Pruitt to tour the Vatican, pose for photos and tell his European counterparts that global warming doesn’t matter,” Eric Schaeffer, director of the Environmental Integrity Project, said in a statement Tuesday. “And it doesn’t even include salary costs for everyone who signed up for this tour. Maybe next time he should just send his regrets.”

EPA officials pushed back, saying the security measures were in line with those for past EPA administrators.

“Administrator Pruitt’s security detail followed the same procedures for the G-7 environmental meeting in Italy that were used during EPA Administrators Stephen Johnson, Lisa Jackson and Gina McCarthy’s trips to Italy,” agency spokesman Jahan Wilcox said in an email. “EPA’s security procedures have not deviated over the past 14 years.”

However, the amount of security has escalated significantly under the current administration because of Pruitt’s 24/7 protection since shortly after taking office. He and his aides say the heightened security is necessary given the increased threat level he faces, including vulgar online comments and verbal confrontations during his public appearances. The incidents have included “some very personal, ugly threats,” Patrick Sullivan, the EPA assistant inspector general for investigations, told The Post last year.

Henry Barnet, who directs the EPA’s Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics and Training, said last month that the head of Pruitt’s security detail recommended in May he fly in first or business class to provide “a buffer” between him and the public. The memo by Pasquale “Nino” Perrotta was prompted by an incident that month when a person approached Pruitt “with threatening language” that was “vulgar,” Barnet said.

Separately Tuesday, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) asked the EPA’s inspector general to investigate whether the agency’s spending on Pruitt’s security detail is “excessive or inappropriate and whether it detracts from the agency’s ability to investigate environmental crimes.”

Whitehouse’s letter cites various instances in which Pruitt’s detail accompanied him around the

clock even when he was not conducting official business, including when he attended the Rose Bowl game in January and later took his family to Disneyland. Whitehouse asked investigators about costs associated with such trips, namely how much taxpayers are responsible for.

“While I consider matters of personal security to be extremely serious,” the senator wrote, “personal security should never be used as a pretext to obtain special treatment.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/379295-pruitts-security-detail-cost-30000-for-italy-trip>

Cost of Pruitt's Italy trip rises above \$84,000

By Timothy Cama, 3/20/18, 11:37 AM

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt spent more than \$30,000 on security related expenses during his travel to Italy last summer, official documents show.

New EPA travel documents show Pruitt's personal security detail racked up \$30,553.80 in travel expenses between June 5 and 12 of last year. Added to previously disclosed costs, the documents put the total taxpayer cost of the trip above \$84,000.

During that time period, Pruitt was visiting Italy for meetings at the Vatican and to meet with international energy ministers at a summit. The administrator heavily photographed and tweeted about his time abroad.

Travel vouchers previously obtained by the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) put the cost to taxpayers above \$53,000 for the Italy trip, but did not include costs for his 24-hour security detail.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the cost for Pruitt's security detail followed protocol.

"Administrator Pruitt's security detail followed the same procedures for the G7 environmental meeting in Italy that were used during EPA Administrators Stephen Johnson, Lisa Jackson, and Gina McCarthy's trips to Italy. EPA's security procedures have not deviated over the past 14 years," Wilcox said.

Pruitt's own first-class tickets for the trip cost more than \$7,000 and included a return flight on Emirates, an airline that boasts one of the most luxurious first-class services in the world.

An EPA spokesperson previously said the first-class travel was approved through a waiver.

The EIP first obtained the new travel documents Monday after filing a lawsuit against the EPA in September to compel a response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Their initial FOIA request, filed in August, requested "records of expenditures for all travel outside of Washington, DC by Administrator Pruitt, as well as any EPA staff that accompanied Administrator Pruitt" on his Italy trip.

"That's a lot of money for Mr. Pruitt to tour the Vatican, pose for photos, and tell his European counterparts that global warming doesn't matter. And it doesn't even include salary costs for everyone who signed up for this tour," said Eric Schaeffer, the EIP's director and former director of the EPA's Office of Enforcement, in a statement.

The new documents come after significant scrutiny and criticism of Pruitt for his travel costs. The EPA's Office of Inspector General has a number of probes into Pruitt's travel, including his use of a round-the-clock security team.

Pruitt is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour detail, a decision he said was made by security officials. The detail cost more than \$830,000 in his first three months in office, E&E News reported.

The administrator has also faced criticism for flying luxury class during business travel. During much of his tenure at the EPA, Pruitt has only flown first or business class, which the agency argued was necessary for security purposes.

“The quantity and type of threats that I face are unprecedented. They wanted me on a position on the plane to be able to exit expeditiously if an incident arose, and that’s why the change arose,” Pruitt said of his security detail in an interview last month with CBS News’s Major Garrett.

Pruitt has joined numerous Cabinet secretaries in attracting criticism for their use of taxpayer money.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson have each had spending-related controversies, while former Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price resigned due to a scandal regarding his use of charter planes.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-epa-spending/epa-chiefs-security-detail-on-italy-trip-cost-30000-document-idUSKBN1GW29H>

EPA chief’s security detail on Italy trip cost \$30,000: document

3/20/18, 1:21 PM

(Reuters) - The U.S. government spent over \$30,000 on personal security for Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt during his trip last year to Italy, according to documents obtained by a watchdog group that said the spending was irresponsible at a time of budget cuts.

According to the document, obtained by the Environmental Integrity Project through a Freedom of Information Act request and shown to Reuters, Pruitt's personal security detail racked up \$30,553.88 in travel costs from June 5 through June 12, 2017, when Pruitt was in Italy for meetings at the Vatican and to attend a summit of foreign energy ministers.

Previous documents released by EIP showed the cost of Pruitt's trip to Italy at \$43,000, not including the security detail. The new documents, which include airfare and expenses for Pruitt, his career and political staff, and his security detail, put the cost over \$80,000, EIP calculated.

"Mr. Pruitt's trip to Rome last summer cost the taxpayers over \$84,000," said Eric Schaeffer, EIP's director. "That's a lot of money for Mr. Pruitt to tour the Vatican, pose for photos, and tell his European counterparts that global warming doesn't matter," he said.

Spending by top officials in the Trump administration has come under more scrutiny by critics at a time when federal agencies have been making sharp budget cuts. Lawmakers have also criticized Pruitt for frequently flying first-class, and for spending tens of thousands of dollars on a secure sound-proof telephone booth for his office.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the security detail "followed the same procedures for the G7 environmental meeting in Italy that were used during EPA Administrators Stephen Johnson, Lisa Jackson, and Gina McCarthy's trips to Italy. EPA's security procedures have not deviated over the past 14 years."

It was unclear from looking at the document how many members were in the security detail, and no breakdown of the spending was provided.

EIP has been critical of Pruitt's statements questioning the causes of global climate change and his efforts to roll back environmental protections.

EPA has said Pruitt has flown first-class as a security measure, and that the administrator does not make decisions relating to his security detail.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/security-for-pruitts-italy-trip-cost-31k-844666>

Security for Pruitt's Italy trip cost \$31K

By Emily Holden, 3/20/18, 11:57 AM

The cost for the security team to accompany EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on a trip to Italy for international meetings in June totaled nearly \$31,000, bringing the price tag for Pruitt's trip to at least \$120,000, according to public records released to the Environmental Integrity Project under a lawsuit.

The additional expenditures include airline fare, lodging and accommodations for Pruitt's security guards, EIP said. EPA would not disclose whether any security staff flew first or business class alongside Pruitt, the group said.

Information obtained by EIP last month showed the four-day trip by Pruitt and his staffers cost about \$53,000 in expenses. Pruitt also spent \$36,000 on a military flight to New York to catch a plane to Rome for meetings ahead of the G-7 Environment Ministerial in Bologna, after attending an infrastructure event with the president in Cincinnati.

Pruitt appeared briefly at the G-7 talks before returning to Washington for a Cabinet meeting.

AP

<https://apnews.com/7c35a9f631344fa0ba87b09b28ee5927/New-travel-costs-revealed-for-EPA-head-amid-ongoing-scrutiny>

New travel costs revealed for EPA head amid ongoing scrutiny

By Michael Biesecker, 3/20/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt spent more than \$120,000 in taxpayer funds last summer for a trip to Italy that included a meeting of G-7 ministers and a private tour of the Vatican.

The known cost of Pruitt's previously reported trip grew this week after the agency disclosed a highly redacted document showing expenses for Pruitt's security detail cost more than \$30,500. That's on top of nearly \$90,000 spent for food, hotels, commercial airfare and a military jet used by Pruitt and his staff.

Pruitt has defended his frequent travel, the full cost of which hasn't been publicly revealed. That includes sitting in first class, which he described as a security precaution.

Spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the security procedures for Pruitt were the same as for prior EPA chiefs.

The Detroit News

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/03/19/mich-begin-oil-refinery-cleanup-muskegon-lake/33081455/>

Mich. to begin oil refinery cleanup on Muskegon lake

3/19/18, 12:17 PM

North Muskegon – Officials will soon begin cleaning up lead and petroleum contamination from a former oil refinery in western Michigan.

The Muskegon Chronicle reports that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality hope to make significant progress this year at the former Zephyr Oil Refinery site in Muskegon Township.

Sara Pearson is a unit supervisor for the DEQ's remediation and redevelopment division. She said Thursday the effort aims to remove 44,000 cubic yards (33,600 cubic meters) of contaminated soil and sediments from the site and nearby wetlands.

Cleanup crews will inject a liquid chemical agent in the soil at the site. The compound will break down the harmful underground petroleum deposits. A hydraulic vacuum truck will suck up leftover chemicals and un-oxidized soil.

AP

<https://apnews.com/72b0b0c0320f43b482df02683bca0fc4/Michigan-to-begin-oil-refinery-cleanup-on-Muskegon-lake>

Michigan to begin oil refinery cleanup on Muskegon lake

3/19/18

NORTH MUSKEGON, Mich. (AP) — Officials will soon begin cleaning up lead and petroleum contamination from a former oil refinery in western Michigan.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality hope to make significant progress this year at the former Zephyr Oil Refinery site in Muskegon Township, the Muskegon Chronicle reported .

The effort aims to remove 44,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediments from the site and nearby wetlands, said Sara Pearson with the DEQ's remediation and redevelopment division.

"Our beautiful beach sand is black, it smells awful and is full of petroleum, so we needed to get it out," Pearson said.

An estimated 150,000 gallons of petroleum percolated underground and spread once it hit the water table, she said.

"The ground water helped it move," Pearson said. "It was most unfortunate then that the refinery has a groundwater divide underneath. That made the problem spread to about 100 acres."

The Muskegon River's strong current helped pull contaminants away from drinking wells, she said.

Cleanup crews will inject a liquid chemical agent in the soil at the site. The persulfate oxidizer compound will break down the harmful underground petroleum deposits. A hydraulic vacuum truck will suck up leftover chemicals and un-oxidized soil. Crews will begin in the middle of the site and work outward.

“We know where the heavy spots are and where to target,” Pearson said. “We’re working in one grid at a time, and we have other wells out there that we can monitor and see how much we’re influencing. If we haven’t influenced enough or got enough out, we will ‘wash, rinse and repeat.’”

The EPA and the DEQ will monitor the site to watch for deposits that may have been overlooked, she said.

Muskegon Lake is one of 43 toxic hotspots the United States and Canada have identified along the Great Lakes basin.

AP

<https://apnews.com/26a11609ab144d1d93a19c1a360ba519/Feds-add-a-week-for-comments-about-Superfund-proposal>

Feds add a week for comments about Superfund proposal

3/19/18

GRENADA, Miss. (AP) — Federal officials are giving people another week to comment about whether a polluted Mississippi industrial site should go on the national Superfund cleanup list.

Listing the Rockwell International Wheel & Trim site in Grenada would make it eligible for long-term cleanup money.

Forty-two comments had been submitted as of Monday, when the comment period was scheduled to end.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency extended it until March 26.

Ohio-based Ice Industries now operates part of the 40-acre complex as Grenada Stamping.

The industrial solvent trichloroethene was used there in manufacturing and chrome plating. It's been found on site, in an adjacent neighborhood, in a creek and at a dump site. Residents of the Eastern Heights neighborhood have long complained about contamination.

New Hampshire Public Radio

<http://nhpr.org/post/seacoast-reps-sue-coakley-group-records-portsmouth-prepares-release-toxic-waste-documents#stream/0>

Seacoast Reps. Sue for Coakley Group Records as Portsmouth Prepares to Release Toxic Waste Documents

By Annie Ropeik, 3/19/18

The city of Portsmouth says it expects to release a trove of documents about toxic waste cleanup

at Coakley Landfill Superfund Site around the end of this month.

It comes as a group of Seacoast lawmakers files suit to get records from the entities responsible for that pollution, known together as the Coakley Landfill Group.

When the landfill first became a Superfund site in the 1990s, an Environmental Protection Agency settlement laid out who belongs in that group and what share of the overall environmental damage each is responsible for.

Almost two-thirds of that damage is attributed to municipalities – primarily Portsmouth, as well as the towns of Newington and North Hampton. The rest is split among more than two dozen private businesses.

But some state representatives argue the Coakley Group's communications and financial records still constitute public information.

On Friday, Rockingham County Reps. Mindi Messmer, Renny Cushing, Phillip Bean, Henry Marsh and Mike Edgar, along with former Portsmouth Assistant Mayor James Splaine, sued in Superior Court to get those records. (Read a draft of the lawsuit.)

Earlier this year, those plaintiffs filed requests under the state's Right-to-Know law with the Coakley Group, as well as with Portsmouth, Newington and North Hampton.

Coakley Group chair and Portsmouth city attorney Robert Sullivan responded in early February. He said the city of Portsmouth hoped to fill its part of the request within six weeks, but the Coakley Group could not.

"Who do they report to? What kind of entity are they? It's all very murky to us."

"Because the Coakley Landfill Group is a voluntary association of parties and not a

governmental entity the Right-to-Know law would not apply to the Coakley Landfill Group,” Sullivan wrote. (Read his entire letter.)

Messmer disagrees, but says Coakley’s parameters as a public-private entity aren’t clear.

“Who do they report to? What kind of entity are they? Who do they have to tell where their expenditures are going? It’s all very murky to us,” she says.

Her new lawsuit seeks records on how the Coakley Group handled at least \$10 million in public funds. Some of that money was initially supposed to fund a comprehensive treatment system for contamination at the Superfund site.

"We just want to get to where all this money went, why was the system never installed, and try and work toward finding a solution right now that works for the communities of the Seacoast," Messmer says.

The goal, she says, is making that erstwhile treatment system a reality, and preventing potential leaching of contamination from Coakley into surrounding towns’ drinking and groundwater.

Messmer also sponsored legislation in the State House this session that would have spurred the release of Coakley documents. She says the issue is currently on track for interim study.

Messmer did get House approval for another Coakley bill, which would compel the state Department of Environmental Services to get money from the Coakley Group for remediation. That proposal goes next to the Senate.

Meanwhile, a hearing on the public records suit is set for April 12 in Rockingham Superior Court.

It's unclear whether Portsmouth's documents will answer the questions lawmakers have raised.

But Robert Sullivan says Messmer and her colleagues may get some of the answers they're looking for before then, when Portsmouth fills its part of their records request.

Sullivan says they're preparing to release reams of paper files spanning the 26-year history of the Coakley Group and the Superfund site.

"The completion of that calls for assembling a tremendous number of documents – certainly over a hundred thousand pages," Sullivan says.

He expects that work to be complete, and the documents available for public review, "on or about March 28."

It's unclear whether the city of Portsmouth's documents will overlap enough with Coakley Landfill Group records to answer the questions lawmakers have raised.

Sullivan says he views some of those issues, such as the spending of federal money on the landfill, "as a matter of public record." He says he expects to produce documents about them as part of this month's release.

Messmer remains skeptical.

"The city of Portsmouth was not the only responsible party in this, and so we don't know that we'll get the types of things that we're looking for," she says. "There's going to be a whole set of records that we will not be able to access through just the city."

And she's not optimistic the answers lie in any EPA records. The agency manages the settlement that formed the Coakley Group, but Messmer says federal officials don't have much oversight of

the group's finances.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076851/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt aide didn't have to sign Trump ethics pledge

By Kevin Bogardus and Amanda Reilly, 3/20/18

One of U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top aides wasn't required to sign President Trump's ethics pledge.

Byron Brown, deputy chief of staff for policy, was hired in an "administratively determined" position — a unique hiring authority held by the agency under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Consequently, Brown was not designated as a political appointee and didn't have to abide by the pledge.

"Because I am in an Administratively Determined position, I have been advised by [Office of General Counsel]/Ethics that I am not considered an appointee for the purposes of Executive Order 13770 and therefore not required to sign the Trump Ethics Pledge," Brown said in his recusal statement, obtained by E&E News under the Freedom of Information Act.

Brown did note that as an executive branch employee, he was subject to federal impartiality standards and that he had a "covered relationship" with his spouse's employer, Hess Corp. According to his statement, dated last Sept. 26, Brown has recused himself from matters that would have an impact on Hess — even issues of "general applicability" that are focused on oil and gas exploration and production as well as oil and gas processing and transportation.

Brown's recusal lasts until his spouse is no longer employed by Hess. But he is not recused from "broad policy deliberations" related to "diverse interests," such as EPA's risk management plan rulemaking, which was specifically cited by the EPA official.

The Obama-era regulation would require chemical plants to draft plans to prepare for potential disasters. It was originally scheduled to be implemented in March 2017, but Trump's EPA has since delayed the rule for nearly two more years, a decision that is being challenged in court.

Brown is one of several former aides to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) to join EPA under Pruitt. Last year, he was picked to serve on the agency's regulatory reform task force, which was tasked with identifying rules for repeal or modification.

EPA press officials didn't respond to a request for comment from E&E News, including to a question on whether Brown planned to sign the Trump ethics pledge.

Other senior officials have avoided signing the president's ethics pledge.

Nancy Beck, deputy assistant administrator in EPA's chemicals office, was also brought on in an administratively determined slot and didn't sign the pledge. That attracted scrutiny due to her prior job before joining the agency as a top executive with the American Chemistry Council (Greenwire, Aug. 8, 2017).

EPA can hire up to 30 employees in administratively determined positions under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The specific provision for that hiring authority was added in the law's 1977 amendments. It allows the administrator to bring on new staff "without regard to the civil service laws."

Last year, Democrats on Capitol Hill took notice of the agency's use of the hiring authority and called for probes to see whether it was used to avoid ethics rules. That led to both the EPA inspector general and the Government Accountability Office committing to investigate the matter (Greenwire, Jan. 9).

Jennifer Kaplan, an EPA IG spokeswoman, confirmed to E&E News that the watchdog office's audit of EPA's use of administratively determined positions is still ongoing. Meanwhile, GAO spokesman Chuck Young said the agency's probe is "on hold" because the EPA IG audit is underway and GAO doesn't want to overlap with that investigation.

"We don't want to duplicate efforts," Young said. "We will make a determination on whether there are still questions for GAO to examine once the IG work is completed."

Lobbyists pledge not to lobby

Like Beck, other top EPA officials have grabbed attention for industry ties. Democratic senators questioned the hire of Tate Bennett at the agency last year due to her previous lobbying work for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, a powerful utility trade group (Greenwire, May 16, 2017).

Bennett, who leads EPA's public engagement office, said in a recusal statement dated last November that she is prohibited from participating in "any particular matter" involving NRECA. Her recusal lasts until March 19 next year — two years after she joined government service.

She also noted that she "personally lobbied" on matters that might arise at EPA, but only in her "final months" on the job with the utility trade group — specifically the Clean Power Plan, ozone standards and coal combustion residual issues. Bennett said she wouldn't participate in discussions about those issues, although she can be involved in "logistical matters," such as setting up meetings. She will seek guidance from ethics officials if she is asked to participate "in a more substantive role" in those issues.

Other records obtained under FOIA show that Bennett has signed Trump's ethics pledge, as well. So did Pruitt, just a few days after he was confirmed as EPA administrator by the Senate in February 2017.

Like Bennett, other top EPA officials have pledged to stay away from their prior employers.

Troy Lyons, who leads EPA's congressional and intergovernmental relations office, was a Hess lobbyist before coming to the agency. Before he worked at Hess, he had lobbied for BP PLC.

In his recusal statement, Lyons said he was banned from being involved in matters with Hess and BP. His recusal will expire in April 2019.

He noted that during the previous two years, he had lobbied Congress on the renewable fuel standard, crude oil exports, offshore air emissions and methane emissions — issues that are before EPA. Yet as head of congressional affairs, Lyons said, he wouldn't be involved in the "strategy, development or implementation" of those matters, although he would consult with ethics officials if he did become more involved.

Henry Darwin, assistant deputy administrator at EPA, said in his recusal statement that he would abide by an "one-year cooling off period" with his former employer, the state of Arizona. His recusal lasts until July 4 this year and doesn't extend to matters of "general applicability," like rulemaking.

Darwin joined EPA last year as its chief of operations after serving as a top aide to Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R). He also has been director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

Darwin also said in his statement that he was recusing himself from "any award, promotion, or any other personnel or administrative matter" that involves his wife, Veronica, who works at EPA, as well.

Veronica Darwin, a senior adviser in EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, also has an one-year cooling off period with the state of Arizona, her previous employer, which ends this June, according to her recusal statement.

Richard Yamada, a deputy assistant administrator in EPA's Office of Research and Development, has owned stock in companies like ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil Corp. and Statoil ASA, all valued in the range of \$1,001 to \$15,000, according to his financial disclosure report, dated last October.

But Yamada has a sizable investment in Berkshire Hathaway Inc., the sprawling conglomerate whose holdings include PacifiCorp, the Oregon-based electricity producer, and several other utility and energy companies.

Because of that "current level of [Yamada's] financial ownership" in the company — reported in the range of \$100,001 to \$250,000 — Yamada said he is recused from any matter that will have a direct effect on Berkshire Hathaway, "including any particular matter of general applicability that is focused on sectors in which" the company and its subsidiaries operate. Those encompass pipelines, renewable fuels, alternative fuels, natural gas and electricity, Yamada wrote.

While EPA ethics officials don't expect that his work with the research office will likely "have a direct and predictable financial effect" on Berkshire Hathaway, Yamada said he would first consult with them "prior to participation" if any such situation should arise.

Other senior political appointees have pledged to stay away from certain issues. Dave Ross, head of EPA's water office, has recused himself from participating in the agency's deliberations regarding the Pebble mine project in Bristol Bay, Alaska (see related story).

Legal team's recusals

Several members of the Trump administration's legal team at EPA have ties to companies and entities that have been closely involved in environmental policy or battled with the agency during the Obama administration. Because of those ties, Trump officials have been recused from a number of matters in front of the agency, according to documents obtained through FOIA.

Matt Leopold, the top lawyer at the agency, has several potential conflicts due to his past work for the state of Florida.

Leopold served as general counsel to the state Department of Environmental Protection until March 2015. Leopold continued to provide legal services to the state until June 30, 2017. He was sworn in as general counsel at EPA on Jan. 8.

In a Jan. 10 impartiality determination, principal deputy general counsel Kevin Minoli granted Leopold permission to participate as general counsel in matters that involve Florida, though he wrote that Leopold is required to recuse himself from any matters in which he participated "personally and substantially" as a lawyer for the state. In a Feb. 1 recusal statement, Leopold wrote that he would not participate in any matters involving Okaloosa County, Fla.

In his statement, Leopold noted that several former industry clients, including AT&T Inc., BASF Corp., Ford Motor Co., Siemens Corp., and the Republican National Committee may have environmental interests that conflict with his work at EPA. He is barred from working on matters involving those entities until Jan. 7, 2020.

Leopold also recused himself from litigation brought by the federal government against the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection regarding phosphorus pollution at Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and Everglades National Park. Leopold also wrote that he would not participate in BASF's challenge to pollution loads for northern Florida's Ochlockonee Basin.

Erik Baptist, EPA's senior deputy general counsel, was a senior counsel and a lobbyist for the American Petroleum Institute prior to joining the agency. He was registered to lobby for four years up until 2016, and his portfolio included working on legislation dealing with the renewable fuel standard program.

Last year, Baptist received a limited waiver from Trump's ethics pledge to participate in discussions involving the RFS.

In an October memo, Baptist recused himself from other issues in which API is a party and said he would not participate in litigation that the oil and gas group filed or was involved in against EPA during the Obama administration. The recusal statement expires June 18, 2019.

The long list of cases from which Baptist is recused includes challenges to the 2015 ozone standard and Obama-era methane limits for the oil and gas industry. Baptist also said he would not participate in the ongoing litigation filed by opponents of the Trump administration over Pruitt's decision to delay safety and emergency response rules for chemical plants.

Baptist also agreed to not participate in matters involving the George Washington University Law School alumni association, Alphabet Inc. or U.S. Bancorp.

Deputy general counsels at EPA have also recused themselves from matters in front of the agency.

David Fotouhi, who joined EPA in March 2017, wrote that he would not participate in matters involving several clients he represented while an attorney at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, including the Association of American Railroads, Carnival Corp., Daimler AG, General Electric Co., Lockheed Martin Corp., Tesoro Corp. (now known as Andeavor) and Trout Unlimited. The recusal period ends March 26, 2019.

Justin Schwab, who was part of the Trump administration's "beachhead" team before joining EPA permanently, pledged to not take part in matters involving law firm Baker and Hostetler LLP, his former employer. His list of former clients includes the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, Caterpillar Inc., Chevron Corp., Southern Co. and Valero Renewable Fuels Co. LLC.

Schwab also said he wouldn't participate in legal issues where the state of Oklahoma or the Virginia House of Delegates is a party. Those recusal periods have already ended — Sept. 23 last year for Oklahoma and Aug. 31 for Virginia (E&E News PM, March 1).

Other top officials' past legal work has led them to recuse themselves from issues before EPA.

Sarah Greenwalt, the agency's senior adviser for water and cross-cutting initiatives, came to EPA

after serving as general counsel at the Oklahoma attorney general's office during Pruitt's tenure there.

In November 2017, Greenwalt submitted a recusal statement stating she would not participate in any cases in which Oklahoma is a party, petitioner or intervenor. The 15 listed cases included challenges to the Obama administration's Clean Water Rule, its Clean Power Plan and various air rules, including methane standards and a rule setting requirements for industrial facilities during periods of startup and shutdown.

Greenwalt also said she would not participate in the litigation against Volkswagen AG over the German automaker's diesel emissions cheating scandal.

The recusal period lasted until March 2. Greenwalt was not barred from working on cases in which Oklahoma participated only as an amicus and not directly as a party.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076825/search?keyword=EPA>

Water chief recuses himself on Pebble, but not Chesapeake Bay

By Ariel Wittenberg and Dylan Brown, 3/20/18

The head of U.S. EPA's Office of Water will not be involved in any decisions tied to the Pebble mine project in southwestern Alaska.

David Ross, who represented mining company Pebble LP during his time at Washington, D.C., law firm Crowell & Moring LLP, withdrew himself from all matters related to the contentious copper and gold mining proposal.

A recusal statement, obtained by E&E News under the Freedom of Information Act, says the decision was made out of "an abundance of caution to avoid even the appearance of an ethical or professional responsibility concern."

But Ross has not recused himself from other cases he worked on before leaving Crowell & Moring in 2013 to join another D.C. law firm, including EPA's effort to clean up the Chesapeake Bay.

Ross was "an essential part of the team" that represented Pebble, said Richard Schwartz, who led the effort for Crowell & Moring.

In 2013, for example, Ross was one of four attorneys to file comments on behalf of the mining firm regarding EPA's draft assessment of the potential impacts of mining on Bristol Bay.

The analysis backstopped the agency's 2014 decision to propose pre-emptive limits on mining in Bristol Bay's headwaters to protect the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery.

Crowell & Moring's comments thoroughly rejected EPA's conclusions, arguing that the mine's impact on salmon would be "minimal."

"By ignoring modern mining practices, EPA has created exaggerated risk scenarios," the attorneys wrote.

After Ross' departure, Crowell & Moring continued to represent Pebble, including in the first lawsuit the company filed against EPA in 2014 (Greenwire, May 29, 2015).

That case was dismissed by a federal appeals court, but another of Pebble's three lawsuits tied up the mine in court until President Trump took office.

In 2017, days after EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt met with Pebble executives, the Trump administration brokered a settlement resolving all Pebble litigation and paving the way for the mine application the company submitted in December.

In January, Pruitt took observers by surprise when he reversed his order to withdraw the proposed restrictions, but Pebble permitting continues (Greenwire, Jan. 30).

Schwartz said Crowell & Moring is not currently working for Pebble, but Ross has decided not to participate in "any associated litigation, settlement agreement, and permitting."

"I am obliged to protect the confidences of my former clients," his statement says. "I also understand that I cannot participate in any matter that is the same as or substantially related to the same specific party matter that I participated in personally and substantially" without obtaining a waiver from EPA's Ethics Office.

With Ross stepping back, decisions about Pebble now fall to Office of Water Deputy Assistant Administrator Lee Forsgren. Forsgren, the second highest-ranking political appointee in the office, did not have to be confirmed by the Senate.

He also has professional experience in Alaska, having worked as a staffer for Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) in the 1990s.

While Young has not come out for or against the mine itself, he staunchly opposed the preemptive limits, saying last year that they "sent a chilling message to any and all future development in Alaska" (Greenwire, May 17, 2017).

Chesapeake Bay

While Ross won't be working on any Pebble-related matters, he has not recused himself from EPA's cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay.

That's despite his former work on a team of Crowell & Moring lawyers representing the American Farm Bureau Federation in a lawsuit against EPA's setting of a "pollution diet" for the bay. The Farm Bureau argued that the Clean Water Act did not allow for such measures, and that EPA's total maximum daily load (TMDL) for pollutants washing off land effectively asserted federal control over local land use and was unconstitutional.

Ross slammed EPA modeling that helped set the pollution limits in oral arguments before the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Mid-Atlantic weekly farming newspaper Lancaster Farming described Ross as criticizing the standard as flawed because it couldn't accurately measure nutrient loadings at the local level.

Ross left Crowell & Moring in 2013 to join another firm before the case went to the court of appeals. There, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the Farm Bureau, calling its argument "long on swagger, but short on specificity."

Still, the Chesapeake Bay cleanup remains a point of contention between Congress and the Trump administration, which has proposed drastic budget cuts to the program two years in a row. In fiscal 2018, the administration proposed eliminating the program altogether, and in fiscal 2019, the administration proposed a 90 percent cut, which would eliminate funding to help state and local governments reduce pollution in the bay.

EPA did not respond to questions about why Ross recused himself from one case he worked on in 2013 and not another.

In addition to Pebble, Ross has recused himself from all litigation challenging the Obama administration's Clean Water Rule. Ross sued EPA over that regulation as a senior assistant attorney general in Wyoming's Water and Natural Resources Division in 2015. He has not recused himself from lawsuits relating to the Trump administration's delay or rewrite of the

regulation. He is also not recused from rulemaking related to the definition of the waters of the U.S.

Other EPA officials have similarly recused themselves from litigation they worked on at their previous posts (see related story).

EPA's designated agency ethics official has issued an impartiality decision for Ross, who served as director of the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Environmental Protection Unit just before joining EPA. Under that determination, Ross can participate in matters that involve Wisconsin, but not in specific matters he worked on while there.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/epa-wants-nominees-for-key-air-quality-advisory-panel-844413>

EPA wants nominees for key air quality advisory panel

By Alex Guillen, 3/20/18, 10:51 AM

EPA is looking for nominees to its Clean Air Scientific Advisory Board, which provides expert advice to Administrator Scott Pruitt on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

In a Federal Register notice to be published Wednesday, EPA says it is "especially interested" in experts "who have knowledge and experience relating to criteria pollutants," including ozone and particulate matter.

The terms of four of CASAC's seven members expire at the end of September, according to a federal database. Those four scientists could seek re-appointment, although Pruitt has shown an interest in bringing new members onto his advisory panels.

Asked to confirm EPA will need to fill four spots on CASAC, a spokesman said only that Pruitt "is looking to appoint the most qualified candidates to provide independent counsel to the Agency to further our core mission."

Pruitt last year appointed three new members to fill CASAC's other seats, including Denver-based researcher Tony Cox as the new chairman. Cox testified in 2015 that EPA's tightened ozone standard was based on health benefits that he called "unwarranted and exaggerated."

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will take nominations for 30 days, and later will take public comment on the nominees for 21 days.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076857/search?keyword=EPA>

D.C. Circuit upholds Obama-era haze rule

By Amanda Reilly, 3/20/18

A federal court today upheld an Obama-era air pollution rule, rejecting petitions filed by environmentalists, states and industry.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit found that U.S. EPA properly

used a program for reducing cross-state emissions to satisfy the Clean Air Act's regional haze requirements.

"Because we find no merit in the conservation petitioners' arguments and can afford no relief to the state and industry petitioners, the petitions are denied," Senior Judge Stephen Williams, a Reagan appointee, wrote for a three-judge panel of the court.

The Clean Air Act's regional haze program is meant to improve visibility at national parks and wilderness areas. Under it, states are supposed to impose "best available retrofit technology," or BART, requirements on certain stationary air pollution sources, typically power plants.

In a 2012 rule, EPA found its cross-state air pollution rule for reducing pollution in the eastern United States was stringent enough to satisfy those technology requirements, thus excusing states that are part of the program from compliance with BART itself.

EPA in the same rule also disapproved of certain state implementation plans under the regional haze program because they had relied on the cross-state rule's George W. Bush-era predecessor.

The National Parks Conservation Association and Sierra Club challenged the first part of the rule, arguing it let power plants avoid having to install haze-reducing controls.

"What we really want is for BART to be well-applied at each individual source," said Earthjustice attorney Charles McPhedran at oral arguments in November in front of Williams and Judges Cornelia Pillard and Thomas Griffith (Greenwire, Nov. 16, 2017).

The Utility Air Regulatory Group, power companies, Texas and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, on the other hand, challenged the latter part of the rule, arguing the plans EPA disapproved offered "far better improvement" in visibility.

In today's 15-page opinion, Williams wrote part of the environmental groups' challenge was

moot because it appeared to be aimed at a decision EPA made more than a decade ago to allow categorywide information to be used to meet regional haze requirements. He wrote the D.C. Circuit had also previously upheld similar EPA interpretations of the regional haze program.

Williams also rejected the environmentalists' concerns about averaging pollution emissions. The greens had argued the cross-state pollution rule, which deals with average air pollution, wasn't enough to satisfy the regional haze program's goal of improving visibility at specific locations. The groups said that EPA's rule left 14 national parks and wilderness areas with worse visibility.

"It is in the nature of averages that some particular sites may underperform while others overperform," Williams wrote. EPA's rule requiring aggregate average improvement "was reasonable," he added.

The industry challenges met a similar fate.

Williams wrote that the court couldn't order EPA to consider the Bush-era Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) as an alternative to reducing regional haze because the rule was "already stricken and ordered to be vacated."

In short, the Obama-era cross-state program overrules the Bush version.

"Without CAIR — which all parties agree is dead and beyond revival — there is no legal basis for a requirement that states control their sources at CAIR levels," Williams wrote.

[Click here to read the court's opinion.](#)

AP

<https://apnews.com/ef9fe81b94d14dcdabb0a408f7edee49/Company-that-leases-farm-land-on-Navajo-agrees-to-fine>

Company that leases farm land on Navajo agrees to fine

3/19/18

FARMINGTON, N.M. (AP) — An Idaho-based company that leases farm land on the Navajo Nation has been fined for failing to post information on pesticides and ensuring protective gear properly fits workers.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says Navajo Mesa Farms agreed to pay about \$6,000 to settle four violations from 2013 and 2016.

The company has an office in Farmington and grows potatoes on tribal land.

The EPA says the company didn't post pesticide safety information for workers or indicate a buffer zone for fumigants that would keep bystanders from the area.

The agency says the company also didn't check that workers' respirators fit properly.

The settlement agreement was finalized late last month.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/pruitt-proposes-changes-to-refinery-rules-he-says-will-save-millions-849177>

Pruitt proposes changes to refinery rules he says will save millions

By Alex Guillen, 3/20/18, 2:25 PM

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt today signed a proposal to make various technical changes to a trio of refinery emissions rules that he says will save refiners millions of dollars.

The changes touch on several requirements related to maintenance vents, operations of steam-assisted flares, fenceline monitor placement, pressure relief devices, work practice standards and recordkeeping and reporting rules, according to EPA.

The agency estimated the changes would save refiners from an initial capital investment of \$77 million and annual costs of \$11.5 million. EPA also said that "none of the proposed amendments are projected to appreciably impact the emissions reductions associated with these standards."

Click for the prepublication notice and an agency fact sheet.

EPA's proposal also makes a number of typographical fixes to the rules that were published in December 2015. EPA frequently issues such typo fixes for its regulations.

The American Petroleum Institute and American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, which petitioned EPA for the changes, quickly praised the proposal, saying it will "reduce uncertainty."

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will take public comment for 45 days once the proposal is published in the Federal Register.

E&E Daily

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060076795/search?keyword=EPA>

Republicans question Pruitt's Pebble commitment

By Dylan Brown, 3/20/18

Republican leaders checked this month with U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt after his reversal on proposed restrictions for the Pebble mine venture in Alaska.

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee published a letter yesterday to Pruitt from Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas), House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) and Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.)

The March 7 message came after Pruitt withdrew his own request to eliminate the Obama administration's pre-emptive limits on mining, which undercut Pebble LP's plans for a major copper and gold project in the headwaters of Bristol Bay (Greenwire, Jan. 30).

Pruitt said his action "neither deters nor derails" Army Corps of Engineers permitting that began in December, but the Republicans, who applauded Pruitt initially, now have "serious concerns about the commitment to this goal."

Smith and Bishop's committees held a slew of hearings on the Obama team's decision to use EPA's Clean Water Act veto authority to restrict a large-scale mine in southwestern Alaska to protect Bristol Bay's massive salmon fishery (E&E Daily, April 29, 2016).

Republicans decried the "unprecedented" pre-emptive use of a power EPA has invoked only 13 times, accusing officials of colluding with anti-mining activists on a "questionable scientific assessment."

The Obama administration and EPA Region 10, which was in charge of the science, steadfastly defended their work.

Now, Smith, Bishop and Gosar gave Pruitt a "specific course of action" to stick with the typical permitting process.

The letter states Region 10 officials should monitor the scoping process, but if the Army Corps' environmental impact statement addresses all the issues, Pruitt should withdraw the 2014 proposed determination.

That, the letter states, "establishes a commitment to regulatory certainty and environmental protection while advancing the Administration's commitment to streamlining the permitting process based on sound science."

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/gop-lawmakers-air-serious-concerns-about-pruitts-pebble-decision-837916>

GOP lawmakers air 'serious concerns' about Pruitt's Pebble decision

By Alex Guillen, 3/19/18, 4:21 PM

Key House Republicans told EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt earlier this month that they have “serious concerns” about his surprise announcement in January that the proposed Pebble Mine would likely pose an unacceptable risk to Alaskan resources, especially the Bristol Bay salmon fishery.

Pruitt's decision to suspend the EPA's proposed withdrawal of Obama-era restrictions was "unfortunate," wrote House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah), House Science Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus. The newly posted letter is dated March 7.

“Despite this decision by the EPA, the Committees believe that the agency can continue to uphold the principles of due process and the rule of law by proceeding with a specific course of action,” the lawmakers added.

The mine's Clean Water Act permit application is being processed by the Army Corps of Engineers, and EPA has said it will hold off on taking action until that process is complete. In the meantime, the lawmakers suggest, Pruitt should closely watch the Corps' process and later "make a final informed decision on the status of the proposed determination."

WHAT'S NEXT: The Army Corps permitting process is expected to take until 2019.

Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/epa-to-hold-national-summit-on-chemicals-found-in-drinking-water>

EPA to hold national summit on chemicals found in drinking water

By John Siciliano, 3/19/18, 7:41 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency said Monday that it will hold a two-day summit in May to address a chemical that has been seen as a drinking water contaminant.

“EPA’s leadership summit will bring together stakeholders from across the country to build on the steps we are already taking and to identify immediate actions to protect public health,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. The summit will be held to address perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl, which have been turning up in the water supplies of many states.

The chemicals provide the nonstick properties found in everything from kitchenware to food packaging. Studies are being conducted on the effects of the chemicals on humans, including by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The administration formed a task force to address safety concerns in November 2017.

The two-day summit, which will be held May 23 to 24 in Washington, will be used to provide "critical national leadership," while ensuring state, tribal, and local governments that they will be able "to help shape our path forward," Pruitt said. He announced the summit in a letter sent Monday to governors of all 50 states, tribal leaders and the leaders of U.S. territories.

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, a Republican, released a joint statement with Pruitt in announcing the summit. Snyder was at the center of the years-long lead water crisis in Flint, Mich.

“We need a national effort to review the expanding scientific research on these contaminants, as well as possible responses and remediation,” Snyder said. "Having a national dialogue on this growing concern could be instrumental in establishing standards, protocols and best practices that will allow all state and federal partners to comprehensively address these contaminants across the country.”

The Environmental Council of the States, the main trade group representing state environmental regulators, also provided a statement. "Many states cannot take action on PFAS [perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances] issues until EPA makes a regulatory determination, and all states would like to see continued federal research and leadership in this area," said the council's executive director, Sambhav Sankar.

President Trump has said that his environmental policy calls for "crystal clear" drinking water. The EPA and other agency announcements this month may be the first steps in what that water policy looks like.

A day after meeting with Trump last week, Energy Secretary Rick Perry announced a new competition with the private sector to address a range of water issues, including drinking water concerns.

"That includes increasing alternative water supplies, reducing costs to treat drinking water and wastewater, using water more efficiently, and advancing market-based solutions that incentivize innovation and cooperation," Perry said. "It is my hope that today is the beginning of a process that will result in bringing water to those in need."

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/audio/2018-03-19/let-pruitt-do-it-epa-rules-rollback-means-fewer-riders-on-bill>

Let Pruitt Do It: EPA Rules Rollback Means Fewer Riders on Bill (*Audio)

3/19/18, 3:03 PM

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's rollback of Obama-era Environmental Protection Agency rules is taking some of the steam out of Republican efforts to load up the fiscal 2018 omnibus

spending bill with policy riders. Bloomberg Government's Jack Fitzpatrick discusses it with Nancy Lyons in the Bloomberg

99.1 Washington newsroom.

Radio +1-212-617-5560

Running time 05:47

Audio discussion link: <https://link.bloomberg.fm/BLM8726974078>

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=130071229&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Manufacturers Want Clarity on Chemicals EPA Will Scrutinize

By Pat Rizzuto, 3/20/18

Chemical makers want the EPA to give clear signals about the types of substances it will sift through to decide which get scrutinized for possible regulation and which get off the regulatory radar—at least temporarily.

The most effective time for companies to urge the Environmental Protection Agency to investigate or not investigate a chemical is over the next few months before the agency releases its first “prioritization” list of chemicals, and before it announces future prioritization decisions

in years to come, Mark Duvall, a Beveridge & Diamond PC attorney, told Bloomberg Environment.

The agency will prioritize more chemicals in future years, but it is unlikely to sift through as many at one time as the Toxic Substances Control Act amendments require it to do in 2019.

The agency must release its first prioritization list of 40 chemicals by early 2019—at the latest—to meet a statutory deadline to classify them as high or low priorities for risk evaluation, Jeffery Morris, director of the agency's chemicals office, said during a recent chemical regulations conference.

Half of those chemicals must come from the EPA's work plan that it created before Congress' 2016 overhaul of TSCA.

The list may also include compounds that have provoked public controversy such as lead or per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) chemicals, due to alarm about their presence in water supplies, airfields, and elsewhere, according to industry consultants.

Some chemical manufacturers would like the EPA to give them a heads up by naming candidate chemicals it might prioritize before it selects the 40 TSCA requires. Once the agency releases the list, the law gives it only nine to 12 months to decide whether a chemical is a high- or low-priority for risk review.

Information by July

The agency must begin to evaluate the risks of high-priority chemicals as soon as they get that classification. If the multiyear risk evaluation shows a chemical poses an unreasonable risk of harming people or the environment, the EPA must regulate or take other steps to reduce that risk.

A low-priority designation means the agency sets the chemical aside because it has information showing the molecule does not have many hazards, exposures to it are not high, or the chemical is already well controlled, Duvall said. New information can prompt the agency to reexamine a

chemical it previously classified as a low priority.

By early July, the EPA will announce details and accept comments on the procedures it will use to identify the 40 chemicals it will screen and classify, Morris said.

State Laws

Most chemical manufacturers will be less interested in the general procedures the EPA will unveil, said Duvall, who advises the American Chemistry Council and other trade associations. They want information to help them determine whether a chemical they make is likely to be included in the list of 40, he said.

For example, the EPA could identify types of chemicals or chemical properties that it plans to focus on, said Paul DeLeo, a principal with Integral Consulting Inc. It also could clearly articulate the types of information that would help it determine whether a chemical is a high- or low-priority, he said.

Chemical manufacturers may want the agency to examine their molecule as either a potential high- or low-priority substance, Duvall said.

If, for example, multiple states are considering regulating a particular chemical, it might benefit manufacturers to have the agency evaluate it. A low-priority designation would not prevent states from regulating, but could provide evidence that controls aren't needed.

In 2017, state legislatures introduced 248 bills to control the hazards of just one chemical, lead, the National Conference of State Legislatures said in a February [analysis](#). In 2016, 33 states enacted 69 laws addressing lead and other chemicals, it said.

Benefits of Early Data

Providing the EPA disposal, recycling, or workplace control details—or offering it chemical exposure or toxicity data—could help companies support their position that a chemical warrants

a certain designation, Duvall said.

Steve Owens, an attorney with Squire Patton Boggs, said it's important for the EPA to have data early in its selection process.

Having information before the prioritization process begins means the agency may not have to require new information, said Owens, who served as EPA's assistant administrator for chemical safety and pollution prevention during the Obama administration.

Having data on hand could prevent additional requests for data the agency may not need.

Regardless of whether it's a valid concern, chemical makers are worried the EPA will require a lot of testing and then stick the lab results in a drawer for a long time, Owens said.

The agency can avoid that by clearly signaling to the EPA what data it's really going to need, said Owens and DeLeo.

60 Chemicals

Liz Hitchcock, acting director of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families—a coalition of environmental, labor and other non-profit groups—said the EPA should focus on those with the greatest hazards and highest exposures.

The Safer Chemicals coalition recommends the agency identify 60 chemical candidates—instead of 40—for prioritization and systematically gather toxicity and exposure information.

The agency's data gathering should include both voluntary and mandatory efforts, she said. Since 2016, EPA has not issued testing orders requiring companies to submit new data under TSCA.

Possible Chemicals

Companies should not wait for the EPA to release its prioritization list or even candidates for such a list, DeLeo said. They should take time now to analyze their chances of being selected and start working with their suppliers and customers to gather information, he said.

The EPA already is evaluating the risks of 10 of the approximately 90 chemicals on the agency's work plan, he said. That leaves about 80 chemicals, of which about 20 could be selected as high-priority chemicals, DeLeo said.

If a company makes one of those 80 chemicals, there's a roughly one-in-four chance the EPA will select its product, DeLeo said.

That probability increases if a chemical—such as lead—is of high interest, he said.

The chances also increase if the agency has recently invested time studying the chemical, DeLeo said.

Working With the Great White North

For example, the EPA and Canadian regulators recently developed case studies evaluating the risks of five chemicals: 4-tert-octylphenol, triphenyl phosphate, phthalic anhydride, cyanide compounds, and molybdenum compounds.

The agencies' work, carried out through the Regulatory Cooperation Council, is not designed to reach conclusions about those chemicals' risks. Instead the agencies are identifying similarities and differences in their risk assessment strategies.

Yet, the EPA may have gathered information about or become more familiar with these chemicals, DeLeo said. Familiarity could increase the chance the agency would select one or more for prioritization.

States' interest in the roughly 3,000 PFAS compounds—produced for the heat-, stick-, and grease-resistance properties they can impart—could prompt the agency to select some of them for prioritization even though they aren't on the work plan list, DeLeo said. Those compounds have been made by 3M, the Chemours Co., Clariant, Daikin Industries Ltd., DuPont, and other chemical manufacturers.

Increasingly states are detecting them in the environment and drinking water sources. The most well-known members of this group are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).

PFAS are such a “hot topic,” that “I would not be surprised to see them picked up,” DeLeo said.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=130071227&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

EPA Action on Fuel Chemical in Drinking Water One Step Closer

By Tiffany Stecker, 3/20/18

The EPA is close to finishing a report on a chemical best known as a rocket fuel ingredient, in another step toward regulating the substance's presence in drinking water sources around the country.

The agency is under a consent decree to regulate perchlorate in drinking water after years of

failing to do so. Perchlorate affects thyroid function and can disrupt normal development in fetuses and children, according to the EPA.

“We're close to getting a final peer review report,” Peter Grevatt, director of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, told attendees at the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies’ policy conference March 19. “We're on a tight schedule and we are going to keep moving forward on that progress.”

Under the settlement between the EPA and environmental advocacy group Natural Resources Defense Council, the agency is required to adopt a regulation by Dec. 17, 2019, and propose a maximum contaminant level goal for the chemical by Oct. 31. The NRDC sued the agency in 2016 for missing deadlines to regulate perchlorate.

The NRDC didn't immediately respond to Bloomberg Environment's request for comment on the announcement.

The peer-reviewed report will analyze the EPA's model assessing how ingesting perchlorate affects human bodies, particularly children in the months before and after birth. It would allow regulators to assess how vulnerable populations respond to the chemical.

Perchlorate can occur naturally but has also been used for fuel and in food packaging to reduce static. The Food and Drug Administration denied a petition to ban the chemical in packaging, saying the justification for restricting it was based on outdated practices in the food industry.

E&E Daily

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060076797/search?keyword=EPA>

Deal elusive with riders, some funding unsettled

By George Cahlink and Geof Koss, 3/20/18

Congressional leaders are hoping to wrap up negotiations regarding a \$1.3 trillion fiscal 2018 omnibus spending package today, after a handful of unresolved policy and funding issues kept them from finalizing it overnight.

"I would hope that would meet our obligation, which would be [to pass it] at the end of the week," said Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), a senior appropriator, yesterday.

Lawmakers need to have the bill sent to the president by Friday when existing funding for federal agencies expires.

"There's still a lot of outstanding issues that they're working on," said Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), chairman of the House Energy-Water Appropriations Subcommittee.

Simpson stressed that the Energy-Water spending bill had been settled and he did not believe any issues on the measure were still being haggled over by House and Senate leaders. He declined to offer specifics.

Lawmakers suggested the unresolved issues include \$1.6 billion in funding for work on a U.S.-Mexico border wall and \$900 million in funding proposed for a series of rail and transit projects linking New York and New Jersey, known as the Gateway project.

The White House has made border wall funding a top priority, while saying it would veto the measure if the Gateway dollars are attached.

Several unspecified environmental riders are also being negotiated by party leaders.

Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Interior-EPA spending panel, took a hard line yesterday on the need to attach riders that would scrap the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule and delay U.S. EPA ozone attainment standards.

Calvert suggested last week those add-ons may not be needed because EPA could make those changes administratively. But he said yesterday Congress should take action because it will take EPA longer to make the changes.

"We need time, so we have to keep these riders in place in order to unwind WOTUS and make sure this ozone top line is brought down to a reasonable number," said Calvert, who suggested leaders were negotiating those provisions.

The Congressional Western Caucus, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American Petroleum Institute, continued to press yesterday for several policy priorities in the package, including eliminating the WOTUS and ozone rules, easing of the the Endangered Species Act and forest management reforms.

Karen Alderman Harbert, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Energy Institute, specifically called for scrapping the 2015 ozone regulation, saying it is a "tremendous barrier" to economic growth.

Calvert, meanwhile, declined to confirm potential cuts in EPA staff but said the bill would give EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt "flexibility" to manage the agency.

House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said there are a handful of environmental and land-related provisions he hoped might still make the package.

He expressed frustration, however, that so many were already dropped from negotiations with almost no input from the authorizing committees.

"The process sucks," he said.

Bishop also brushed off frustrations raised by environmentalists that lawmakers are using a spending bill to make significant policy changes.

"Tell the environmental groups if they'd quit suing everybody there'd be no riders in play," Bishop added.

New Mexico Sen. Tom Udall, the top Democrat on the Interior-EPA Appropriations Subcommittee who has pressed to strip most environmental riders, said "quite a few are in play."

He said he was concerned that a bipartisan fix for wildfire funding accounts may not make the final legislation because Republicans were seeking to tie it to more partisan riders.

"The riders overall are interfering with coming to agreement. They don't belong on an appropriations bill, in particular they don't belong when the Republicans control the Congress and the executive branch," Udall said.

As negotiations continued, lawmakers and aides brushed off questions about missing Friday's deadline and perhaps needing to pass a short-term funding measure or work into the weekend.

They suggested as long as the bill was posted by today, it could still move through the House on Thursday and then the Senate on Friday.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biofuels-trump/trump-administration-preparing-list-of-possible-biofuels-tweaks-sources-idUSKBN1GV2S4>

Trump administration preparing list of possible biofuels tweaks: sources

By Jarrett Renshaw, 3/19/18, 4:57 PM

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The heads of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Agriculture Department are scheduled to meet on Tuesday to winnow down proposals to lower the cost of the nation's biofuels policy to oil refiners, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

The meeting in Washington marks the latest development in the Trump administration's efforts to find common ground between the rival oil and corn industries over the future of the Renewable Fuel Standard, a law requiring refiners to blend biofuels like ethanol into the nation's gasoline and diesel.

The program has created a vast new market for Midwest corn farmers, but refiners have complained the regulation costs them hundreds of millions of dollars a year - creating a rift between two of Trump's key electoral constituencies.

EPA chief Scott Pruitt and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue will draft a list of options for President Donald Trump to choose from during their meeting on Tuesday, according to the sources, who asked not to be named discussing the confidential matter. It is unclear whether the list will include a broad range of options mooted by both sides during recent negotiations hosted by the White House, or whether it will provide narrower recommendations, the sources said.

Officials for the EPA and Agriculture Department did not respond to requests for comment.

The RFS requires refiners to blend increasing amounts of biofuels into their fuel each year, or buy credits, known as RINs, from those that do. As biofuels volumes have increased, the price of RINs has too. Merchant refiners such as Valero and bankrupt Philadelphia Energy Solutions say the costs have become too burdensome.

Trump told lawmakers and industry officials in a closed-door meeting earlier this month that he supported a temporary cap on the price of RINs at 10 cents each, according to a source who attended but asked not to be named.

But a group of corn-state lawmakers told Trump in a letter last week that a cap would have “severe and immediate” consequences to farmers and the biofuels industry, by reducing incentives for blending.

Trump also said he supported expanding sales of high-ethanol gasoline year-round – a tweak long sought by ethanol producers, according to the source.

Credit costs have fallen roughly 40 percent in the past three weeks amid the political uncertainty, trading at 40 cents each on Monday, traders said.

Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/bothered-by-fragrances-this-story-will-be-a-breath-of-fresh-air/2018/03/19/ace83e8a-26cd-11e8-b79d-f3d931db7f68_story.html?utm_term=.924dc512df12

Bothered by fragrances? This story will be a breath of fresh air.

By Elisabeth Leamy, 3/20/18, 7:00 AM

“More and more, I walk into homes, stores and businesses and am greeted with an immediate blast of perfumed air. . . . And what is added scent but a chemical? Why breathe that in constantly”

When a Washington Post reader wrote the comments above and implored me to write an article about how to avoid scented products, I was an easy sell. I find artificially perfumed products so distracting that I have trouble concentrating in their presence. I can’t stand to have certain brands of dryer sheets in my house, even in an unopened box in the basement. And I confess that I once sneaked an air freshener out of an Uber and tossed it in the trash!

A growing stink

Despite negative reactions from some consumers, scented products seem to be gaining popularity. For example, plastic garbage bags never used to be scented, but an industry blog says that many now are and that “the market is a fiercely competitive one, so the battle to win the noses of consumers is on.”

As manufacturers make more of their products smell, consumers are putting up more of a stink. Dozens of blogs rail against scented products, including one called “Fragrance Free Living” and another called “Think Before You Stink.” These citizen bloggers call fragrance “the new secondhand smoke.” They’re not crazy. The Environmental Protection Agency says indoor air pollution is real, partly because of fragrances, and that our homes and offices “can be more seriously polluted than the outdoor air in even the largest and most industrialized cities.”

The people who suffer the most from fragrances are those with multiple chemical sensitivity, or MCS. “Fragrances rank high among the chemical exposures I find problematic,” said Alison Johnson, who has MCS and founded the Chemical Sensitivity Foundation. “One thing that alarms me is that in the last few years, the phone calls and emails I’m receiving are now predominantly from people in a panic because exposure to fragrances in the workplace is making it impossible for them to keep a job.” Johnson produced an educational video and is lobbying lawmakers to mandate fragrance-free workplaces.

But artificial fragrances aren't just a problem for certain groups. More than a third of Americans surveyed reported experiencing health problems when exposed to them, according to a study by Anne Steinemann of the University of Melbourne. "All fragranced products that I tested . . . emitted chemicals classified as hazardous air pollutants," Steinemann said in an email. "You may not realize you're being affected until it's too late."

The Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety lists the following possible symptoms of exposure to fragrances: "headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, weakness, insomnia, numbness, upper respiratory symptoms, shortness of breath, skin irritation, malaise, confusion and difficulty with concentration."

Labeling confusion

If you're allergic to nuts or sensitive to gluten, you can read the ingredients on a food package and steer clear. By contrast, fragrances have long been considered trade secrets, so the federal government doesn't require manufacturers to print what's in them. The Food and Drug Administration requires manufacturers to list the ingredients in personal-care products, but they are allowed to just state "fragrance" as an ingredient, rather than spelling out what chemicals are in the fragrance.

Federal regulations for household cleaning products are even looser. Manufacturers are not required to list any of these products' ingredients. A few big companies have begun disclosing their ingredients voluntarily, including SC Johnson, Clorox and Reckitt Benckiser, maker of Lysol. Two states, California and New York, recently took matters into their own hands, passing laws requiring manufacturers to divulge the ingredients in their cleaning products.

Here's another confusing labeling issue involving fragrances: The terms "unscented" and "fragrance-free" sound the same but are totally different. Unscented means that a product doesn't have a detectable odor — but it does not mean that it contains no artificial scents. Manufacturers are allowed to use artificial scents in "unscented" products if they are there to cover up the smell of other ingredients.

By contrast, "fragrance-free" is the label to look for if you are bothered by chemical fragrances, as it means no artificial smells have been added to a product. You can double-check this claim, if there are ingredients listed, by looking for the words "perfume," "parfum" or "fragrance" on the list.

Resources for consumers

Here are some resources for finding fragrance-free products.

EPA Safer Choice-certified products: The EPA scrutinizes product ingredients for safety and certifies those that meet its criteria. When you search the Safer Choice database, you can check a box to look for fragrance-free products only. I found 860 of them when I looked. You can also look for the Safer Choice label on products at the store. Those that have no chemical scents are marked “fragrance free” in the upper left-hand corner of the label.

Environmental Working Group guides: The EWG provides easy-to-use online databases where you can search for what it deems healthy cleaners and healthy personal-care products. You can then check those products’ ingredients, if provided, to see whether “fragrance” or “perfume” is listed.

New York state’s asthma-friendly guide : Because people with asthma suffer more than most from exposure to chemicals and fragrances, New York created a list of green cleaning products for them that could be useful to you, too. If you type “fragrance free” into the keyword box, the site returns a page full of options.

DIY cleaning product recipes: Women’s Voices for the Earth has been working for better cleaning-product disclosures. Meanwhile, the group provides several recipes to make your own cleaning products. Note: The essential oils used as fragrance are considered more natural but still bother some people. If they bother you, skip them!

Non-perfumed magazines: If the perfume inserts in magazines you’ve subscribed to bother you, contact the publisher. Most large publishers have programs in place to send you magazines without the scented pages.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Halper, Evan
Sent: Thur 9/21/2017 3:44:15 PM
Subject: Re: Here you go - let me know what else you need

Got it. Appreciate it, Jahan.

From: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 11:40:31 AM
To: Halper, Evan
Cc: Bowman, Liz; Graham, Amy; Abboud, Michael
Subject: Here you go - let me know what else you need

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Background Without Attribution – As Everything Below Is In The Public Domain

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe

drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Betsy Southerland questioned Pruitt’s decision to partner with states to protect the environment. “Southerland questioned Pruitt’s belief that the EPA and federal environmental standards were guilty of ‘running roughshod over states’ rights.” ([The Huffington Post](#), 08/02/17)

Governor Dayton (DFL-MN) praised Administrator Pruitt for working with the states and even said he didn’t want the regional EPA offices micromanaging his state. “Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as ‘productive and cordial’ and said he’s hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. ‘We don’t believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,’ Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour.” ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

According to McClatchy, Congress will move forward with their own budget. “Trump’s fellow Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but even so lawmakers are expected to move forward with their own budget blueprint this spring, as they traditionally have done.” ([McClatchy](#), 03/16/17)

The White House’s Budget no matter who is in power has become increasingly irrelevant as Congress has the power of the purse. “First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president’s budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades.” ([Forbes](#), 02/01/16)

In 2015, President Obama’s budget received 1 vote. “President Obama’s budget suffered its latest ignominious defeat when the Senate rejected it on a 98-1 vote Tuesday evening, capping off the first votes of the budget season.” ([The Washington Times](#), 03/24/15)

In 2012, not a single person in the Senate or the House voted for President Obama’s budget. “President Obama’s budget suffered a second embarrassing defeat Wednesday, when senators voted 99-0 to reject it. Coupled with the House’s rejection in

March, 414-0, that means Mr. Obama's budget has failed to win a single vote in support this year." ([The Washington Times](#), 05/16/12)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he expects Congress to ignore the budget. "Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has already said he expects the Republican-led Congress to largely ignore the proposal, saying in an interview last week with Bloomberg News that early versions reflected priorities that "aren't necessarily ours." ([Bloomberg](#), 05/22/17)

In 2016, Elizabeth Southerland made \$249,000.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2015, Elizabeth Southerland made \$183,300.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2014, Elizabeth Southerland made \$181,500.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2013, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2012, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2011, Elizabeth Southerland made \$215,640.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

From: Halper, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 9:35 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: LA Times questions -- civil service

Good morning:

I am reaching out for comment from the agency for a story about the civil service under the Trump administration. Does the EPA have a response to the concerns raised by recently departed employees such as Betsy Southerland and Michael Cox – and echoed by advocacy groups and lawmakers -- that it is sidelining its own scientific research and scientists in pursuit of the Trump political agenda? Has its approach to taking input from career staff changed with this administration?

You can reach me at 916.201.6398 if you would prefer to discuss in an interview. My deadline is 3:30 p.m. today. Thanks very much for your attention to this.

Best,

Evan Halper

National Reporter

Los Angeles Times

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 7/12/2017 10:51:40 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Better Medicare Alliance: W.H. UNDER SIEGE, again -- REINCE comes under fire, but why? -- CROWLEY: 'Trump Jr.'s love affair with Moscow' -- McCONNELL's legislative wish list -- SCARBOROUGH leaves GOP -- B'DAY: Ryan Lizza

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Better Medicare Alliance
07/12/2017 06:47 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL told lawmakers to expect to stay in session through the first two weeks of August. Here what he'd like to see accomplished in the coming weeks, according to several K Streeters: clear executive branch nominations, repeal and replace Obamacare, pass the National Defense Authorization Act, lift the debt ceiling and reauthorize the FDA user-fee structure.

-- **HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERS** have stopped short of saying they'll stay in session -- and privately, some have vowed to stick to the schedule and leave for the summer at the end of July. We assume they'll have to stay in session for the first week of August. Hope you bought refundable plane tickets!

THE UPSIDE of Congress staying in session: Lawmakers show they're working.

THE DOWNSIDE: If they get nothing accomplished, they look incompetent. McConnell wants to clear a bunch of Trump administration nominees. But we're skeptical that will break through with voters. Aides tell us they need to accomplish something tangible.

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE -- @realDonaldTrump at 6:19 a.m. : "My son Donald did a good job last night. He was open, transparent and innocent. This is the greatest Witch Hunt in political history. Sad!" ... **at 6:32 a.m.:** "Remember, when you hear the words 'sources say' from the Fake Media, often times those sources are made up and do not exist."

-- **ACTUALLY, THIS IS NOT TRUE.** We don't know any reporters who make up

sources. We don't make up sources. And Trump's White House often asks to be quoted on background -- which means identifying a source by a vague title, like "White House aide" or "administration official." And this story about the president's son is not based on a "source." It's based on emails that Donald Jr. sent and later released. to ***The president also retweeted a Fox News tweet that featured Jesse Watters saying Donald Jr. is a victim and a Fox & Friends segment praising Mitch McConnell.***

THE MAIN BAR -- THE NYT STORY THAT STARTED THIS ALL -- A1 -- "Russian Dirt on Clinton? 'I Love It,' Donald Trump Jr. Said," by Jo Becker, Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo. <http://nyti.ms/2tHvMYB>

THE WHITE HOUSE UNDER SIEGE STORIES...

-- POLITICO'S TARA PALMERI and JOSH DAWSEY: "White House aides feeling 'helpless' as Trump Jr. scandal blossoms": "White House aides feel blindsided by the bombshell revelations around Donald Trump Jr.'s campaign meeting with a Russian lawyer, while the president is using his relatively light schedule to watch TV and fume about the latest scandal, according to interviews with half a dozen White House officials and advisers. Unlike prior Russia-related controversies, the White House is not minimizing the political ramifications of Trump's eldest son's decision to meet with the Kremlin-linked lawyer after being offered information that he was told would 'incriminate' Hillary Clinton as 'part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump.'"

"But top West Wing aides are exasperated by their limited ability to steer the damage control and the risk that more damaging news has yet to emerge. One Trump adviser said the White House was 'essentially helpless' because the conduct happened in an 'anything goes' campaign that had few rules. This person said he had spoken to several people in the White House on Tuesday, and that 'none of them knew anything about Donald Trump Jr.'s meetings,' despite the fact that top adviser Jared Kushner was also present for the controversial Trump Tower sit-down. Many of the White House aides had previously dismissed the Russia stories as 'conspiracy bullshit,' this person said, but that this scandal was not being dismissed as that." <http://politi.co/2tGPK5R>

-- NYT'S PETER BAKER and MAGGIE HABERMAN: "Rancor at White House as Russia Story Refuses to Let the Page Turn": "As Air Force One jetted back from Europe on Saturday, a small cadre of Mr. Trump's advisers huddled in a cabin helping to craft a statement for the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., to give to The New York Times explaining why he met last summer with a lawyer connected to the Russian government. Participants on the plane and back in the United States debated how transparent to be in the statement, according to people familiar with the discussions. Ultimately, the people said, the president signed off on a statement from Donald Trump Jr. for The Times that was so incomplete that it required day after day of follow-up statements, each more revealing than the last. ... The Russia story has become the brier patch from which the president seemingly cannot escape. ... Advisers said the president was annoyed not so much by his son as by the headlines.

"But three people close to the legal team said he had also trained his ire on Marc E. Kasowitz, his longtime lawyer, who is leading the team of private lawyers representing him. Mr. Trump, who often vents about advisers in times of trouble, has grown disillusioned by Mr. Kasowitz's strategy ... The strain, though, exists on both sides. Mr. Kasowitz and his colleagues have been deeply frustrated by the president. And they have complained that Mr. Kushner has been whispering in the president's ear about the Russia investigations and stories while keeping the lawyers out of the loop, according to another person familiar with the legal team. But one person familiar with Mr. Kasowitz's thinking said his concerns did not relate to Mr. Kushner. The president's lawyers view Mr. Kushner as an obstacle and a freelancer more concerned about protecting himself than his father-in-law, the person said. While no ultimatum has been delivered, the lawyers have told colleagues that they cannot keep operating that way, raising the prospect that Mr. Kasowitz may resign." <http://nyti.ms/2sOYfsx>

PERHAPS the most important detail of the day is Peter and Maggie's reporting that shows the White House crafted Don Jr.'s statement.

-- WAPO'S PHIL RUCKER and ASHLEY PARKER: "'Category 5 hurricane': White House under siege by Trump Jr.'s Russia revelations": "The White House has been thrust into chaos after days of ever-worsening revelations about a meeting between Donald Trump Jr. and a lawyer characterized as representing the Russian government, as the president fumes against his enemies and senior aides circle one another with suspicion, according to top White House officials and outside advisers. President Trump ... is enraged that the Russia cloud still hangs over his presidency and is exasperated that his eldest son and namesake has become engulfed by it, said people who have spoken with him this week. ...

"Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter and senior adviser r; Jared Kushner, her husband and another senior adviser; and first lady Melania Trump have been privately pressing the president to shake up his team -- most specifically by replacing Reince Priebus as the White House chief of staff, according to two senior White House officials and one ally close to the White House. ... After this story first published, Josh Raffel, a White House spokesman, said in a statement on behalf of Kushner and Ivanka Trump: 'Jared and Ivanka are focused on working with Reince and the team to advance the President's agenda and not on pushing for staff changes.' ... One White House official went so far as to stop communicating with the president's embattled son, although this official spoke sympathetically about his plight, casting Trump Jr. as someone who just wants to hunt, fish and run his family's real estate business." <http://wapo.st/2sOAC3G>

BY THE WAY ... Say what you want about Reince, but he has nothing to do with the scandals engulfing this administration. His job is literally impossible: he has to impose order on a president who thrives off chaos.

-- JONATHAN LEMIRE and JULIE PACE of the AP: "As Russia scandal touches his son, Trump privately rages": "The public has not laid eyes on the president since his return from Europe Saturday. But in private, Trump has raged against the latest Russia

development, with most of his ire directed at the media, not his son, according to people who have spoken to him in recent days. The only comment from Trump on the matter for much of the day came in a brief statement via spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who said Tuesday that the president believes his son is 'a high-quality person.'" <http://bit.ly/2uhCt5n>

***** **A message from BMA: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:** We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the right care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:

<http://www.bettermedicarealliance.org/special-needs-plans> *****

NORM EISEN and **RICHARD PAINTER**, ethics chiefs for Obama and Bush, in the **NYT**: **"Did Donald Jr. Break the Law?":** "It raises a host of potential criminal and other legal violations for Donald Jr. and others involved, including his brother-in-law Jared Kushner; Paul Manafort, the campaign chairman at the time; and perhaps the president himself. These new facts are a critical inflection point in the Trump-Russia matter. But they should not be exaggerated: The investigation has much further to go before Donald Jr.'s liability, or that of others, can be finally assessed.

"The defense that this was a routine meeting to hear about opposition research is nonsense. As ethics lawyers, we have worked on political campaigns for decades and have never heard of an offer like this one. If we had, we would have insisted upon immediate notification of the F.B.I., and so would any normal campaign lawyer, official or even senior volunteer.

"That is because of the enormous potential legal liability, both individually and for the campaign. The potential offenses committed by Donald Jr., his colleagues and brother-in-law who attended the meeting, and the campaign itself, include criminal or civil violations of campaign finance laws. These laws prohibit accepting anything of value from a foreign government or a foreign national. The promised Russian 'documents and information' would have been an illegal campaign contribution from a foreign government -- and a priceless one." <http://nyti.ms/2uQkHTI>

FROM 30,000 FEET -- "Trump Jr.'s love affair with Moscow," by Michael Crowley: "While President Donald Trump's handful of trips to Russia have been meticulously scrutinized, a review of his son's public statements spanning several years, as well as social media posts and interviews with Russia experts, shows that Donald Jr. spent far more time in the country than his father did, and developed personal ties there that continued beyond the November election. That might help to explain why Trump Jr. was so receptive to an approach last summer by a Russian lawyer promising dirt on Hillary Clinton which, as an intermediary told him in an email, was part of a Kremlin effort to assist his father's campaign." <http://politi.co/2uhipzU>

DARREN SAMUELSON, "Trump Jr. delivers 'smoking gun' to Mueller: The email chain released by the president's son shows an intent to collude with Russia, veteran

prosecutors and white-collar defense attorneys say": "Two of Donald Trump's most senior campaign advisers -- Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort -- are also included in the 'private and confidential' email exchange, which the lawyers interviewed by POLITICO say exposes them to the same potential federal criminal statutes as Trump Jr., including prohibitions on the solicitation or acceptance of anything of value from a foreign national, as well as a conspiracy to defraud the United States." <http://politi.co/2tGYZTu>

REPUBLICAN frustration on Capitol Hill with the continued drip, drip out of the Trump White House over its Russia scandal is hitting a new high. House Oversight Chairman Trey Gowdy's (R-S.C.) exasperation was on full display in a brief Fox News interview Tuesday. "If you had a contact with Russia, tell the special counsel about it! Don't wait until the New York Times figures it out!," Gowdy said. "Someone needs to get everyone in a room and say, from the time you saw Dr. Zhivago until the moment you drank vodka with a guy named Boris, you list every single contact with Russia." Still, Gowdy declined to say his oversight committee would investigate Russian interference, leaving that to special prosecutor Robert Mueller. ***Rachael Bade's full report*** <http://politi.co/2ucchZ3>

MOSCOW'S NEW MAN IN D.C. -- "Russian diplomacy about to get tougher edge in Washington," by Ali Watkins: "A new -- and likely more aggressive -- chapter in Russian diplomacy is about to begin in Washington with the departure of Russian ambassador Sergei Kislyak, whose soft-power approach to D.C. will be taken over by noted hardliner Anatoly Antonov. The switch in what has become one of Washington's most scrutinized jobs comes as the controversy over President Donald Trump and his allies' ties to Moscow intensifies, especially with the revelation that Donald Trump Jr. met with a Kremlin-linked lawyer at the height of the campaign after being told she could provide damaging information on Hillary Clinton as 'part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump.'

"The scandal has at times centered on secret meetings with Kislyak - a long-time and well-respected diplomat who held the top post in Washington for nine years before his 2016 meetings with Trump officials made him a politically radioactive figure. The 62-year-old Antonov is also a longtime diplomat, but he recently completed a nearly six-year stint as a deputy in Russia's far more hardline defense ministry. Antonov's arrival is expected to be a noted shift in Washington's diplomatic community, where Kislyak was known as an affable fixture on the embassy party circuit, and an experienced political figure with routine official access to U.S. government circles." <http://politi.co/2v9lcqd>

TRUMP'S TRIP TO PARIS -- THE PRESIDENT is going to France for Bastille Day tonight. Here is what he is doing, per a background official to Annie Linskey of the Boston Globe: he is meeting Thursday with Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and then will also hold a bilateral meeting with with French President Emmanuel Macron. Trump and Macron will also hold a news conference. The two, accompanied by their wives, are scheduled to have dinner. "The senior administration official is aware that [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel is [scheduled] to be in Paris earlier on Thursday, but does not expect POTUS to meet with her. 'That's not on the schedule right now,' said a SAO. Trump returns back to Washington Friday.

BURGESS EVERETT and JEN HABERKORN -- "Reeling Republicans take one last shot at Obamacare": "Twenty-three years ago, President Bill Clinton and Senate Democrats canceled two weeks of the August recess to pass a major health care bill. They got nowhere. Now Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is trying the same thing with the GOP for the August break, and it may lead to the same result. ... There will be a vote to advance the bill next week, McConnell said Tuesday. And even if it fails, he made clear to his members at a party lunch that there will be no more false starts despite an increasingly downbeat feeling in the caucus. New text of the proposal will be made public Thursday, and a Congressional Budget Office analysis is expected on Monday. 'We're in gridlock,' said Sen. John McCain of Arizona. He added sarcastically: 'Now we're going to look at a new approach. And we're going to get a CBO estimate on Monday. Yay!'" <http://politi.co/2uQmJDm>

-- NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL: "Republican voters to GOP: Keep working on Obamacare repeal," by Steven Shepard: "The Republican base wants Senate GOP leaders to continue trying to repeal Obamacare despite recent setbacks, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. A clear majority of Republican voters, 67 percent, want the GOP to continue to work to repeal and replace the health care law, compared to only 21 percent who want party leaders to move on. Among all voters, 40 percent want congressional Republicans to continue to work on a new health care bill, and 47 percent want them to move on.

"The poll also suggests that Republicans want Senate GOP leaders to shift gears and work with Democrats to pass a new health care bill. More than half of Republican voters who want the GOP to keep trying to repeal Obamacare, 54 percent, want their leaders to work with Democrats, while just 39 percent want them to work only with other Republicans." <http://politi.co/2uQunNQ>

VALLEY TALK -- "Paying Professors: Inside Google's Academic Influence Campaign," by WSJ's Brody Mullins and Jack Nicas: "Google operates a little-known program to harness the brain power of university researchers to help sway opinion and public policy, cultivating financial relationships with professors at campuses from Harvard University to the University of California, Berkeley. Over the past decade, Google has helped finance hundreds of research papers to defend against regulatory challenges of its market dominance, paying \$5,000 to \$400,000 for the work ... In some years, Google officials in Washington compiled wish lists of academic papers that included working titles, abstracts and budgets for each proposed paper -- then they searched for willing authors, according to a former employee and a former Google lobbyist." <http://on.wsj.com/2tGSz6S>

THE JUICE ...

-- ELIANA JOHNSON is reporting that the Heritage Foundation has hired the Atlanta-based executive search firm CarterBaldwin to assist in its efforts to find a replacement for former Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) to lead the organization. ***The full report***

<http://politi.co/2tFCE8O>

-- **HAPPENING TODAY** -- FBI director nominee Christopher Wray has his confirmation hearing today. It will be live streamed on Twitter via PBS NewsHour. <http://bit.ly/2t3g0J3>
GET SMART FAST with Seung Min Kim and Darren Samuelsohn's piece on "The 6 toughest questions for the next FBI director": <http://politi.co/2uhL207>

-- **SCOOP: "Donna Brazile to publish book on 2016 titled 'Hacks,'"** by Isaac Dove, whose birthday is today: "Brazile will celebrate the one-year anniversary of President Donald Trump's election with the publication of her book 'Hacks: The Inside Story of the Break-ins and Breakdowns that Put Donald Trump in the White House.' ... Brazile's publisher Hachette promises a book that is 'equal parts campaign thriller, memoir, and roadmap for the future.' The publisher did not say how much the book deal was worth."
<http://politi.co/2tdJXkJ>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former Vice President Joe Biden walks through the hallways on Capitol Hill on July 11. | Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP Photo

FOR AVIATION GEEKS -- "Trump rethinking aviation agreements with Gulf countries," by Andrew Restuccia and Michael Grunwald: "The Trump administration is rethinking a pair of international aviation agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar amid allegations that the Persian Gulf nations are unfairly subsidizing their state-run airlines, three administration officials told POLITICO.

"The administration is facing increasing pressure from three of the biggest American airlines -- Delta, United and American -- to do something about the Gulf carriers' low ticket prices, with the U.S. airlines arguing they can't compete with the UAE and Qatar's deep pockets.

"National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, chief of staff Reince Priebus and other senior administration officials have been discussing the issue behind the scenes for months, the officials said. Staffers from the NEC, National Security Council, Transportation Department and other agencies huddled for the latest strategy meeting on the aviation agreements last week while Trump's senior aides were in Europe." <http://politi.co/2uhuK7g>

HOT ON CONSTITUTION AVE. -- "Sources: Cohn is Trump's top candidate to replace Yellen at Fed," by Ben White and Victoria Guida: "President Donald Trump is increasingly unlikely to nominate Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen next year for a second term, four people close to the process said. National Economic Council Director

Gary Cohn is now the leading candidate to succeed Yellen as the world's most important central banker ... If Trump taps Cohn for the Fed, it could enrage economic nationalists in the White House and some staunchly conservative Republicans on Capitol Hill who don't like the former Goldman Sachs president's background as a Democrat who generally favors free trade." <http://politi.co/2vbCnIC>

TWO GOOD MCCLATCHY STORIES -- "Trump-Russia investigators probe Jared Kushner-run digital operation," by Peter Stone and Greg Gordon: "Investigators at the House and Senate Intelligence committees and the Justice Department are examining whether the Trump campaign's digital operation - overseen by Jared Kushner - helped guide Russia's sophisticated voter targeting and fake news attacks on Hillary Clinton in 2016. Congressional and Justice Department investigators are focusing on whether Trump's campaign pointed Russian cyber operatives to certain voting jurisdictions in key states - areas where Trump's digital team and Republican operatives were spotting unexpected weakness in voter support for Hillary Clinton, according to several people familiar with the parallel inquiries." <http://bit.ly/2udFhiU>

--**"Lawyer that met Don Jr. had ties to Russian government, spy agency,"** by Kevin G. Hall: "The Russian lawyer at the center of Donald Trump Jr.'s scandal over possible collusion with Kremlin election meddlers has denied she has ties to the Russian government. But she threatened action by the Russian security service, the FSB, against a rights group working to expose corruption by Russian government officials, according to information in the possession of U.S. prosecutors who had been investigating a large and complex money laundering case involving Russian funds." <http://bit.ly/2tM2xIP>

FUN READ - "Inside the Semi-Secret Life of Rob Goldstone, the Playboy Who Could Bring Down Trump," by The Daily Beast's Gideon Resnick and Kelly Weill: "Before he organized a meeting between Donald Trump Jr. and a Kremlin-connected attorney, Rob Goldstone was known as a New York City playboy who hosted vodka-soaked parties with younger acquaintances in the Russian Tea Room, a Manhattan restaurant blocks away from Trump Tower. Goldstone, 57, is a British music publicist and former journalist based in the New York area, who has represented musicians including John Denver and Michael Jackson. ... [O]ne former member of the scene [said it was the] 'kind of crowd where an apartment party in a loft on Madison Square Park turned into a limo ride turned into illicit substances in the bathrooms at Boom Boom Room, all of it getting paid for ... somehow. One of the fixtures in this scene was Rob, who was always the only old guy in the group.'" <http://thebea.st/2tLUUvZ>

******* A message from BMA: MEDICARE ADVANTAGE TAILORED CARE MEETS THE NEED OF HIGH COST, HIGH NEED CARE SENIORS:** 18.5 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the affordable, robust, and individualized health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, holistic solutions are required.

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<http://www.bettermedicarealliance.org/special-needs-plans> *****

TRUMP INC. - "Hackers have been stealing credit card numbers from Trump's hotels for months," by WaPo's Abha Bhattarai: "Guests at 14 Trump properties, including hotels in Washington, New York and Vancouver, have had their credit card information exposed, marking the third time in as many years that a months-long security breach has affected customers of the chain of luxury hotels. The latest instance occurred between August 2016 and March 2017, according to a notice on the company's website, and included guest names, addresses and phone numbers, as well as credit card numbers and expiration dates. The breach took place on the systems of Sabre Hospitality Solutions, a reservation booking service used by Trump Hotels, but did not compromise the Trump Hotels' systems." <http://wapo.st/2sOBxRs>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "L.A. is a virtual lock to host 2024 or '28 Olympics after IOC vote," by L.A. Times' David Wharton: "The International Olympic Committee on Tuesday approved an unusual proposal to name two winners in the Summer Games bidding race between Los Angeles and Paris. Gathering at a meeting in Switzerland, IOC members unanimously agreed to the idea of awarding 2024 to one city and 2028 to the other. The decision all but assures that Southern California will get the Olympics back for a third time." <http://lat.ms/2t0XT6x>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Scarborough tells Colbert: 'I'm not going to be a Republican anymore'," by Cristiano Lima: "Joe Scarborough, the longtime Republican political figure and MSNBC host whose public feud with President Donald Trump grew to a fevered pitch two weeks ago amid a series of heated attacks, said he is leaving the Republican Party. 'I've got to become an independent,' Scarborough, a one-time Republican congressman and prominent figure in the conservative media sphere, told CBS' Stephen Colbert during an interview airing Tuesday night." <http://politi.co/2tLrPkb>
... **5-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2vbtsHi> ... **Scarborough plays his song "Monkey House"**
<http://bit.ly/2u7VLK5>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Valerie Jarrett and Betsy DeVos last night dining at Fiola Mare. They were at different tables ... Rep. Karen Handel (R-Ga.) walking out of a house on Q street near Dupont Circle just before 8 p.m. yesterday, talking on the phone, still wearing her

American flag pin ... RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel waiting yesterday at the Pittsburgh airport for a delayed flight to DCA ... Reps. Jim Renacci (R-Ohio) and Lou Barletta (R-Pa.) enjoying cigars last night on the patio at Bullfeathers ... Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) walking across Connecticut Avenue yesterday evening headed to Morton's Steakhouse.

OUT AND ABOUT -- SPOTTED last night at a dinner and a special screening of "Wonder Woman" at the MPAA, hosted by Carol Melton, EVP of Time Warner: Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Susan Molinari, Deborah Rutter, Deborah Lehr, Sally Quinn, Genny Ryan, Capricia Marshall, Ruth Marcus, Tammy Haddad, Hilary Rosen, Mary Brady, Heather Podesta, Penny Lee, Ann Stock, Amy Weiss, Jennifer Maguire, Melissa Moss, Elizabeth Bagley, Kathy O'Hearn, Sandra Sobieraj Westfall.

-- **Amazon Public Policy** celebrated its third annual Prime Day with a party last night at the National Union Building. They served banana daiquiris, ate from a raw bar and munched on popcorn. **Pics** <http://smu.gs/2uh1BJn> **SPOTTED** : Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), Reps. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), Mike Bishop (R-Mich.) and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), Internet Association's Michael Beckerman and Amazon's Jay Carney, Brian Huseman.

TRANSITIONS - Alexandra Smith has been named the new executive director of America Rising PAC. She is the former chairwoman of the College Republican National Committee and will be the first woman to lead the organization. **Colin Reed** will now be a senior adviser at AR, working on tracking potential 2020 Democrats. **Katie Glueck's story on changes at the group** <http://bit.ly/2uQhCTy> ... **Kristin Lee** is joining Facebook's communications team to work on Internet connectivity and access. She most recently served as comms director and senior policy adviser for the Obama White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. ... The Center for International Policy has hired **Salih Booker** as its new executive director. He most recently was VP of external relations at the U.S. Institute of Peace. ...

... The Herald Group has added **Marc Brumer**, former comms director for Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) as a VP. It has also hired **Jason Cannata**, formerly with FP1 Strategies, as a director and **Seth Guidry**, formerly with Lukens Company, has joined as a digital account manager. ... **Lara Brown** has been formally named the director of GW's Graduate School of Political Management. She's been at GW for four years as a professor and has been the school's interim director for the last year.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Sacha Samotin, co-founder of political data analytics firm Applecart, got married this weekend to **Laura Resnick**, Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University, in a traditional Jewish ceremony at Natirar Estate overlooking the hills of Somerset County, New Jersey. The couple met in 2013 as undergrads at UPenn. Pool report: "Wedding highlights included a hilarious musical homage to the couple by best-man Noah Samotin and a speech from the bride's sister, Allison Resnick, quoting Virgil in the original Latin. Former Schwarzenegger/Huntsman/Kasich strategist Matt David was spotted on the dance floor enthusiastically lifting the bride's chair aloft during the

hora." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2uQogsT>

-- **SPOTTED:** Sacha's business partners Matt Kalmans and Anthony Liveris, Audrey Scagnelli, Campbell Curry-Ledbetter, Mitchell Resnick, Luke Thompson, Allan Anders, Elizabeth Ashford and Conyers Davis, Stephen Geer and Szelena Gray.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Harley-Davidson lobbyist **April Canter Bohrer** and NAM's **David Bohrer** (who was a photographer for former VP Cheney) welcomed Mia Bohrer into the world last week. "Mom and baby are doing great; April says papa Dave is already a 'supreme swaddler and master diaper changer'!" **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2u85hNb>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Ryan Lizza, Washington correspondent for The New Yorker, celebrating with "a quiet dinner at home with my two boys." Asked how the Trump is presidency going: "Off to a brilliant start!" Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2sOZ4Sf>

BIRTHDAYS: Susan Axelrod ... Josh King, former Clinton visual guru, author of "Off Script," and now weekend host of Slate's "Trumpcast" (h/t old White House buddy Jeremy Gaines) ... Matt Rosenbaum, Treasury alum now at Paul Weiss, is 31 ... Adam Elias, COS to Rep. Bill Foster (D-Ill.) ... Politico's Isaac Dove is 37 ... Beth Lester Sidhu, COO of PE firm The Stagwell Group and a Politico alum ... Brendan Daly, senior director of comms at Save the Children Action Network and former comms director for Nancy Pelosi (h/t Allie Wright and) ... Christie Vilsack ... Jason Childress ... Paul Shone (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Eric Ueland, who has been nominated to be under secretary of state for management, is 52 ... Thea McDonald ... newly upped entertainment spox Brandon Shaw of Fifteen Minutes Public Relations leaves youth behind ... Eva Brown ... Ginny Justice ... Javier Folger, director of marketing and comms for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (h/t Jon Haber) ...

... **Alex Levy**, president of speechwriting firm A.H. Levy & Co. ... Jordan Gehrke, partner of Vertical Strategies and a Ben Sasse alum ... John Gans Jr. ... David Lerman ... Nicole Narea ... Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) is 63 ... Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) is 41 ... former Rep. Mickey Edwards (R-Okla.) is 8-0 ... former Rep. J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.) is 59 ... Angela Belden Martinez ... Ashley Williams ... CBS News' Mary Walsh ... Gregorio Gomez, investment banking analyst at Goldman Sachs ... documentary and news producer and writer Basel Hamdan is 36 ... Jessica Hanks, SVP at DKC ... Brian Schoeneman is 4-0 ... Debbie Keller, director of public affairs at WeWork ... Rachel DiCarlo Currie ... Seton Motley ... writer-producer Brian Grazer is 66 ... actress Michelle Rodriguez is 39 ... Rachel Brosnahan ("House of Cards") is 27 ... Nobel peace prize laureate Malala Yousafzai is 2-0 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from BMA:** Better Medicare Alliance is helping to build the future of care through Medicare Advantage. As a community of experts, we're leading the way on health care through research, policy, and grassroots advocacy. Together, we're creating a path forward for innovative, modern health care. Stand with us: <http://www.bettermedicarealliance.org/special-needs-plans> *****

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 16, 2017

PRESS BRIEFING

BY PRESS SECRETARY SARAH SANDERS

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

3:43 P.M. EST

MS. SANDERS: Good afternoon. Apologies for the delay. It's great to be back with everybody. Certainly missed seeing most of you who weren't on the road.

Q Most of us.

MS. SANDERS: Most of you. I gave myself a little wiggle room there.

The President's historic five-country trip to Asia was an incredible success. He rallied the world against the menace of North Korea; strengthened our alliances and showed our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region; and took a stand for fair and reciprocal trade. As a result of the trip, American families will be safer and more secure, and American workers and companies are one step closer to competing on the level playing field they deserve.

Speaking of leveling the playing field for our workers and businesses, the President applauds the House for passing the Tax Cut and Jobs Act -- a massive step toward fulfilling our promise to deliver historic tax cuts for the American people by the end of the year.

We are encouraged that the House and Senate continue to work together to deliver what the President asked them to do: allow hardworking middle-class families to keep more of their money, and empower our companies and workers to dominate their global competition.

The Senate Finance Committee is also making progress on its companion bill, and will soon advance it to the floor for a vote.

A simple, fair and competitive tax code will be rocket fuel for our economy, and it's within our reach. We'll bring back our jobs, we'll bring back our wealth, and as the President has said many times, we'll bring back our great American dreams. Now is the time to deliver, and we fully expect the Senate to follow the House's suit.

And with that, I'll take your questions. Cecilia.

Q Thank you, Sarah. Two questions -- two topics, if I may. Does the President believe Roy Moore's accusers, or does he think Roy Moore should drop out of this race?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President believes that these allegations are very troubling and should be taken seriously, and he thinks that the people of Alabama should make the decision on who their next senator should be.

Q So that's a no? He thinks Roy Moore should stay in?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President said in his statement earlier this week that, if the allegations are true, then that Roy Moore should step aside. He still firmly believes that.

Major.

Q How would the President like to see that truth proven?

MS. SANDERS: Look, I'm not going to get into and litigate back and forth. But the President has been clear that if any of these allegations are true -- allegations that he takes very seriously and finds very troubling -- if those do happen to be true, then he should do the right thing and step aside.

Q Does the President believe the accusations themselves -- that is to say the women themselves and their own credibility -- can be established outside of them making these allegations? What's the mechanism by which the President would be satisfied that the allegations are true?

MS. SANDERS: Look, I don't think the President has laid out what the mechanisms are. That should be determined possibly by a court of law. But that's also something and a decision that the people of Alabama need to make, not the President, whether or not they want Roy Moore to support them in the Senate.

Q Sarah, Ivanka Trump says that she has no reason not to believe the women who have come forward. Does the President disagree with her position?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President is not disagreeing with anybody. He's saying that he finds the allegations to be extremely troubling. He doesn't know any more than you do on this fact, other than that these are something that should be taken very seriously and that the people of Alabama should be the ones to make the decision on whether or not to support Roy Moore.

Q Thank you, Sarah. Having the information that we have and the information that the people of Alabama have, would President Trump vote for Roy Moore?

MS. SANDERS: The President is not a voter in Alabama, so --

Q I know he's not, but he endorses candidates all the time in states that he's not a voter in. And if he says, "I would vote for this person or I wouldn't," would he vote for Roy Moore.

MS. SANDERS: I haven't asked him if he would vote for Roy Moore.

Q Would you get back to us on that?

MS. SANDERS: Yes. Jon.

Q Thank you, Sarah. A number of Republican senators have pulled their endorsement for Roy Moore. They've urged him to step aside. And Senator Sheldon said he wouldn't even vote for him; he would write someone in on the ballot. Senator Cruz has pulled his endorsement. The President is not only President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief, he's also leader of the Republican Party. Why won't he weigh in on this? Why won't he take the same type of strong position that these other Republican senators have taken on Roy Moore?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President supported the decision by the RNC to withdraw resources from this race, but feels it's up to the people of Alabama to make a decision. So I don't have anything further to add on that.

James.

Q Thank you, Sarah. I don't mean by asking about that to suggest it's necessarily the most important thing facing the country right now, but it happens to be my story assignment for the day. You say that the President finds these allegations against Mr. Moore, Judge Moore, to be very troubling, extremely troubling, et cetera. As we all know, the President faced a number of similar allegations, or somewhat similar allegations during the course of the campaign, and he vigorously denied them.

But I wonder what you would assert to be the difference between the two situations such that, on the face of things, we should find one set of allegations very troubling and, on the other, we shouldn't pay attention to them at all or we should totally disbelieve them.

MS. SANDERS: Well, I think the President has certainly a lot more insight into what he personally did or didn't do, and he spoke out about that directly during the campaign. And I don't have anything further to add beyond that.

Jeff.

Q Sarah, I'd like to ask you about two other topics. The tax bill passed the House today. One of the things that the tax bill does is increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. I know the White House has argued that that will be paid by growing the economy. But if the economy doesn't grow, how do you square that with the Republican view of -- or general principle that deficits are bad?

And on a second --

MS. SANDERS: Well, I mean, I just disagree with the premise of the question. We do expect the economy to grow. We've seen that happen over the last 10 months, and we expect that to continue.

Q But are you confident that the economy will grow consistently enough to cover these costs that otherwise would lead to a ballooning deficit?

MS. SANDERS: Yes. That's been part of our process and part of what we've laid out from the beginning. We expect this to be consistent, and that's certainly what we hope for. That's one of the reasons that the President continues to push for things like deregulation that have helped boost the economy. He's going to continue to push things that help do that and accomplish that, and we feel confident moving forward.

Blake.

Q Sarah, let me ask you about the tax code as well. On the House side, they passed it today. The Senate side still has a ways to go. These are similar but they are also different bills and plans. At this point, does the President have a preference for the House or the Senate bill? And if so, which one?

MS. SANDERS: Right now, both bills achieve the President's priorities -- that's been his focus: tax cuts for middle-class families; simplifying the tax code; slashing tax for businesses of all sizes so they can grow, create jobs, raise wages for their workers, and compete in the global marketplace.

He's laid out those priorities. Right now, both of those pieces of legislation do that, and that's what he's been focused on throughout the process.

Q You didn't say they're repealing the Obamacare individual mandate. Is that a priority for the President as well?

MS. SANDERS: That's something the President obviously would love to see happen. But in terms of the big things that he laid out on the very front end of the principles for the tax reform package, it's those things I just laid out.

Mara.

Q Sarah, thank you very much. I have a question about the trip. But just, first of all, does his endorsement of Moore still stand?

MS. SANDERS: Look, as I've said, the President believes this is a decision for the people of Alabama to make, not one for him to make.

Q Okay. And my question about the trip is that he's made a strong argument that having a good relationship with Russia and with Vladimir Putin is a good thing for the United States. Does the President believe that Putin would ever lie to his face?

MS. SANDERS: Look, as the President said many times before, he doesn't think that it's helpful for him to get into a back-and-forth argument with Vladimir Putin. But he does think that there are places where we can work with Russia, particularly whether it's on Syria, North Korea, or other big global issues that the world is facing. And that's been the President's focus and he's going to continue to look for ways that we can work with them that help America.

Steven.

Q Can I ask you another question about tax reform? Thirteen Republicans in the House today broke from the President, broke from their party leaders because they believe that this bill will actually increase taxes for some, if not many or most, of their constituents in California, New Jersey, and New York.

Those 13 members represent millions of people who, in theory, voted for the President believing

that he would lower their taxes. So what does the President say to those people? And how is this whole tax reform endeavor for them not a bait and switch?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President is still incredibly focused. He's laid out his priorities of making sure that this tax plan helps those in the middle class, and that's exactly what it does. That's the focus of both pieces of legislation in the House and the Senate.

Jim.

Q On Roy Moore, would the President campaign with Roy Moore?

MS. SANDERS: Not that I'm aware of.

Q And can I ask you a follow-up? Do you think he's a creep?

MS. SANDERS: Do I?

Q Yeah.

MS. SANDERS: Look, I don't know Roy Moore. I haven't met him in person, so I wouldn't be able to respond to that.

Kristen.

Q Thank you. Does the President think that Roy Moore is qualified to serve in the U.S. Senate?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President, as I've said about seven or eight times now, thinks that this is a decision for the people of Alabama to make.

Q Sarah, we've heard from you and we've heard from Ivanka on this. When are we going to hear from the President himself?

MS. SANDERS: The President has put a statement out earlier in the week when we were on the trip, and he stands by that statement.

Q But he's ignored shouted questions for two straight days. He's the President of the United States, the leader of the Republican Party; I think a lot of people want to hear --

MS. SANDERS: I'm aware of all of those qualifications of the President, and it's actually my job to come out here and answer questions on his behalf, which I am doing --

Q But he's the President.

MS. SANDERS: -- which I've done, and which he has done repeatedly over the last 12 days while we were on a trip across Asia. So to act like he hasn't answered questions is just silly.

Q Does he think Senator Al Franken should step down? What does he think of Senator Al Franken?

MS. SANDERS: Sorry, Kristen, I'm going to move around.

Q On the other side of the aisle, does the President have a response to the allegations against Senator Al Franken and also the mistrial over Senator Bob Menendez?

MS. SANDERS: On Senator Franken, it appears that the Senate is looking into that, which they should. And we feel that's an appropriate action. I haven't asked him about Senator Menendez.

Q Could you talk a little about the decision-making behind apparently appointing Mick Mulvaney to lead the Consumer Financial Protection Board, at least on an interim basis, given the fact that he's been a longstanding critic of the board -- and (inaudible) existence in the first place? And what signal should we take from that in terms of the future of that board and the director?

MS. SANDERS: I don't have any announcements on that front at this point, but we'll follow up with you in the coming days over any movement in that area.

Francesca.

Q Thank you, Sarah. China has announced that it's sending a special envoy to North Korea tomorrow. The President was just in Beijing. Is that something that the President talked to President Xi about while he was there? Is that something that the President favors?

MS. SANDERS: The President certainly favors China taking a greater role in putting maximum pressure on North Korea. This is one of the things that he and President Xi spoke extensively about over the course of our visit. And certainly any effort in order to denuclearize the Peninsula there in North Korea, then China participating in that, the President certainly supports those efforts.

Q Sorry, I have another question about China and trade. Yesterday in his remarks, the President said that we can no longer tolerate unfair trading practices that steal American jobs and wealth and intellectual property, and the days of the United States being taken advantage of are over. He specifically mentioned China as he said all those words. Does the President still believe that China is raping the U.S. economy?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President knows that there hasn't been fair and reciprocal trade with China. He doesn't think that we've had great ideals in place with China. And he's been very clear, and he was very clear directly with President Xi -- which he'll continue to be -- that we want to make sure that Americans, and American workers in particular, are getting the best deal and the best pieces possible. That was one of the reasons that he worked to secure massive deals totaling over \$250 billion while he was in China. He's going to continue to push for those types of efforts.

Jordan.

Q Thanks, Sarah. Before the President left for Asia, officials here hinted that North Korea might be added back onto the list of state sponsors of terror. Has the President decided to go forward with that move?

MS. SANDERS: I believe the President will be making an announcement and decision on that at the first part of next week. And we'll keep you posted on those details.

Hunter.

Q Thank you, Sarah. The Fish and Wildlife Service is lifting a ban and will now allow elephant trophies imported from Zambia and Zimbabwe. President Trump has previously said he disagreed with big-game hunting. Why does he want this ban lifted? And has he changed his view on the practice?

MS. SANDERS: Actually, there hasn't been an announcement that's been finalized on this front. But at this point, I defer you to the Department of Interior.

Q I did speak to them today. They said that they have a draft of what's going in the Federal Register tomorrow.

MS. SANDERS: Again, there hasn't been an announcement. And until that's done, I wouldn't consider anything final.

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. SANDERS: Again, I would defer you to the Department of Interior for the time being. And when we have an announcement on that front, we'll let you know.

Q Thank you, Sarah. The Senate Judiciary Committee today sent a letter to Jared Kushner alleging that he did not provide all the information that he should have about his e-mails during the campaign, including e-mails regarding WikiLeaks. Do you acknowledge that Mr. Kushner has not been fully forthcoming?

And then, secondly, Donald Trump, Jr. sent out all of this correspondence with WikiLeaks on his Twitter account. Do you acknowledge that the campaign was in touch with WikiLeaks during the campaign? And was the President aware that his son was corresponding with WikiLeaks?

MS. SANDERS: On the first question, Jared's attorney will be putting out a statement momentarily. If that hasn't happened yet, it will happen here within the next half hour or so. So I would refer you to that.

In terms of any other questions dealing with the campaign, I'd refer you to the campaign.

Debra.

Q Thank you, Sarah. After the House passed the GOP healthcare law, you had a celebration in the Rose Garden. I'm assuming there's not going to be a celebration today about the tax bill. What are you doing differently this time around?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President was on the Hill earlier today, took praise and rallied support for the vote. He's very engaged in this process. We're going to continue to be. And we're looking forward to seeing the same results come out of the Senate when they pass a bill and sign historic tax cuts and tax reform by the end of the year.

Q Yes, you have talked about the tax bill in terms of fulfilling the promise to middle-class people that the President made during the campaign and afterward. Why does the President support a bill, though, where the individual tax rates will -- the cuts will expire at the end of 2025, but the corporate rates will never expire, going down from 35 to 20?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President laid out his principles. That's what we've said all along. We're counting on the House and Senate to actually put in the details of that legislation that reflect the priorities that the President laid out. We're going to continue letting this bill work through the process, and right now we think it's in a really good place and we're going to keep pushing forward for progress.

Q Does he think that's a fair bill, to have that one provision expire and the other not?

MS. SANDERS: Again, the President has made clear what his priorities for this legislation are, and we're going to continue to stay focused on this.

Jessica.

Q Thank you. One of the other things that happened in China right after the President left was that this announcement about more foreign ownership in the financial sector in China was announced, but it was announced after the President left. I wonder if that came up in the conversations between the Presidents and if that was part of any ongoing conversations or deals that were reached during the visit or before the visit.

MS. SANDERS: I'm not sure if that specific thing came up. I'd have to check and get back to you.

Q The Chinese Foreign Ministry has taken issue today with the President's statement yesterday that he and President Xi agreed that there would be no freeze-for-freeze proposal regarding North Korea. What is your understanding, or the President's understanding of what he and Xi agreed about that? And does the President stand by that statement yesterday?

MS. SANDERS: Yeah, both sides made their position clear. They're different, but we agreed that they're going to be different positions and therefore it's not going to move forward.

Q Thank you, Sarah. Sarah, before the President left for his trip to Asia, he called on the Justice Department to look into the Democrats and that situation, as he put it. And then days

later, the Attorney General asked special prosecutors to look into the Uranium One allegations in the Clinton Foundation. Did the President cross any lines and try to influence the Justice Department and the Attorney General to look into the situation of the Democrats?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President hasn't directed any investigation or the appointment of a special counsel. In fact, he said publicly that he hasn't been involved with that, and that's entirely up to the Department of Justice.

Brian.

Q Thank you very much. Going back to Russia just a bit. When he said that he spoke with Putin and he believed that he meant what he said -- in other words, there was no collusion with the government --

MS. SANDERS: He actually said he believed that Putin believed what he said, and that he wasn't going to get into an argument with him over that when they had bigger things, like North Korea, like the issues in Syria that they needed to deal with and work together on.

Q Okay, so the question being, he's always maintained that it was the Democrats who colluded with Russia. Is he saying that Putin exonerated the Democrats?

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President still firmly believes that there was collusion with the Democrats during this election process. But, again, he's not going to get into the back-and-forth with a world leader that he needs to work with and wants to work with in order to deal with some of the big and serious things that are facing our country right now.

Q Sarah, as a New Yorker, is President Trump concerned at the potential tax increases for hardworking New Yorkers who can no longer deduct state and local taxes, and might cause an exodus from New York losing his spot as the U.S. and world financial capital?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we've addressed this. A very minimum number of people actually itemize their deductions. But again, I've said it a few times today -- I feel kind of like a broken record today -- but the President is focused on the principles he laid out in making sure that we get the most tax cuts possible for the people of the middle class and for most Americans. And that's what he's been focused on.

I'll take one last question. Eamon.

Q Thank you, Sarah. So Senator Johnson, a Republican, raised some questions about the fairness of the tax proposal, particularly the disparity between corporate and individuals in the way they're -- big corporations and regional corporations in the way they're treated as well.

So the question is: What concessions is the White House prepared to make to Senator Johnson? And if you do make concessions to him, are you worried that other Republicans will demand their own concessions on issues of importance to them and you'll have just a revolving door of senators who want something from you in this bill?

MS. SANDERS: I think that's something for the members of this Senate to work through. Certainly not something the President is getting into the -- necessarily the back-and-forth of that conversation at this point in time. Again, he spoke with Senator Johnson. He supports the priorities. He wants to work with members of this Senate to bring them together to make sure that we pass historic tax cuts and tax reform.

Q Did he offer Senator Johnson anything when they spoke?

MS. SANDERS: No. But he did encourage him to get on board and support the tax reform package.

Thanks so much, guys. We'll be around the rest of the afternoon.

END 4:03 P.M. EST

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 7/24/2017 10:47:48 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by BP: WHAT JARED TOLD INTEL COMMITTEES -- Senate Dems launch 'A Better Deal' agenda -- GROWING CONSENSUS: GOP in disrepair -- PRIEBUS 'sidelined' -- 'WAR' in White House on Afghanistan options -- JOE AND MIKA on NYMAG cover

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by BP
07/24/2017 06:45 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Monday morning. BREAKING AT 6 A.M. -- WHAT JARED KUSHNER IS SUBMITTING TO HILL INTELLIGENCE PANELS -- 4 CONTACTS WITH RUSSIANS -- ANNIE KARNI, "Kushner defends himself ahead of Senate intel meeting: 'I did not collude'": "In pre-written testimony Jared Kushner plans to submit before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Monday -- a high-stakes, closed-door grilling session that is part of the investigation into possible collusion between Russian officials and the Trump campaign -- the powerful son-in-law will try to explain away his four contacts with Russian officials during the general election and the transition as innocent interactions. In an 11-page opening statement provided to reporters early Monday morning ahead of his 10 a.m. appointment with the Senate, Kushner attempts to exonerate himself, writing: 'I did not collude, nor know of anyone else in the campaign who colluded, with any foreign government.' Instead, Kushner paints a picture of himself as a loyal, overworked, under-experienced senior adviser to his father-in-law during a novice campaign that was never staffed up to win.

"The former real estate developer also blames the glaring omissions on his financial disclosure forms -- which did not originally include several meetings with Russian officials that have since come to light -- on an honest mistake made by his assistant at the time. And like others in the Trump orbit who met with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak before Inauguration Day, Kushner also said he had trouble remembering the official after their first brief, previously unreported encounter at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. ...

"His second interaction with a Russian official was the now infamous Donald Trump, Jr. meeting with the Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, that June. Kushner claims

he had no idea what he was walking into. An email from his brother-in-law reminds him of the time change to 4 p.m. for the Trump Tower meeting, and Kushner writes that it was not abnormal to pop into each other's offices for meetings. 'That email was on top of a long back and forth that I did not read at the time,' he writes. 'Documents confirm my memory that this was calendared as 'Meeting: Don Jr. | Jared Kushner. No one else was mentioned.' ... 'I actually emailed an assistant from the meeting after I had been there for ten or so minutes and wrote 'Can u pls call me on my cell? Need excuse to get out of meeting,' Kushner writes." <http://politi.co/2uYQgxR> ... **Kushner's full statement** <http://politi.co/2uQ62ue>

--INTERESTING TIDBITS: KUSHNER says he is "not a person who has sought the spotlight." ... A Russian banker brought him "a bag of dirt" from Nvgorod, the village in Belarus where his grandparents are from. ... He got an email from "Guccifer400," who "threatened to reveal candidate Trump's tax returns and demanded that we send him 52 bitcoins in exchange for not publishing that information. I brought the email to the attention of a U.S. Secret Service agent on the plane we were all travelling on and asked what he thought. He advised me to ignore it and not to reply -- which is what I did. The sender never contacted me again."

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- HERE IS A NEW VIDEO OF SENATE DEMOCRATS discussing their new agenda, "A Better Deal." <http://bit.ly/2tT11q7> They say their agenda is designed to "boost wages, lower costs, and unrig the economy to make it work for all Americans, not special interests or just the wealthiest few." **THE LACK OF A MESSAGE** is one of the major gripes of Hill Democrats.

-- HEATHER CAYGLE and ELANA SCHOR: "Democrats launch economic agenda ahead of 2018 campaign": "Democrats are adding pitches aimed at battling corporate overreach to an economic platform that already includes a trillion-dollar infrastructure plan and paid family leave. Party leaders are also proposing a new independent agency to oversee prescription drug prices similar to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau launched by Sen. Elizabeth Warren as well as an independent 'competition advocate' that would police corporate mergers. ...

"Democrats are launching the agenda under the slogan 'A Better Deal,' which POLITICO reported earlier this month. It's designed as a nod to Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'New Deal,' which helped usher in the modern-day Democratic Party, and also as a dig at Trump, who bills himself as the world's greatest deal-maker." <http://politi.co/2vRaciE>

-- NYT OP-ED: "Chuck Schumer: A Better Deal for American Workers"
<http://nyti.ms/2uPjSxr>

***** **A message from BP:** Over the past 10 years, no energy company has invested more in the U.S. than BP - \$90 billion in total. *Take 60 seconds to see what we're doing to help keep America moving forward.* *****

KEEP IN MIND this is the last scheduled week in session for Congress. The Senate has

said it will stay into August, but with the health care bill unlikely to pass, it seems likely they could get out of Dodge earlier.

-- **CONGRESS** is likely to leave for August recess without passing a budget, spending bills, an infrastructure package, a bill to lift the debt ceiling and tax reform. **52 DAYS** in session between now and the end of the year.

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP is meeting with "victims" of Obamacare, and will speak about the stalled legislation. Trump will then go to Beaver, West Virginia, to speak at the National Scout Jamboree.

***** **A message from BP:** Over the past year alone, we've invested \$5 billion more to expand our U.S. operations. *Check out our latest investment.* *****

THE GROWING CONSENSUS -- "GOP despairs at inability to deliver," by Eliana Johnson and Josh Dawsey: "The Republican Party is more powerful than it's been in more than a decade - and yet it has never seemed so weak. Continuing chaos in the White House has been punctuated by the failure to deliver on the GOP's seven-year pledge to overhaul Obamacare, and has many asking whether the party can capitalize on the sweeping victories it has achieved at the federal, state, and local levels. Ahead of this week's crucial Senate vote on health care, White House aides are already considering how to distance President Donald Trump from Congress and how to go after the Republicans who vote no - an idea the president seems fond of, according to people who have spoken to him. Several people said he plans to keep up the fight, no matter how this week's vote goes." <http://politi.co/2vzL0hp>

-- **"Republicans are in full control of government - but losing control of their party,"** by WaPo's Sean Sullivan and Bob Costa: "Frustrated lawmakers are increasingly sounding off at a White House awash in turmoil and struggling to accomplish its legislative goals. President Trump is scolding Republican senators over health care and even threatening electoral retribution. Congressional leaders are losing the confidence of their rank and file. And some major GOP donors are considering using their wealth to try to force out recalcitrant incumbents. 'It's a lot of tribes within one party, with many agendas, trying to do what they want to do,' Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-N.J.) said in an interview." <http://wapo.st/2vQOtaJ>

TARA PALMERI -- "Priebus sidelined as Washington outsiders' power grows": "Reince Priebus took the punishing job of President Donald Trump's chief of staff with the idea that he would stick it out for at least one year. Six months in, with one of his top allies in the West Wing -- press secretary Sean Spicer -- on his way out, Priebus is in defensive mode, his role diminished and an internal rival hogging the limelight. Trump's decision to bring Wall Street financier Anthony Scaramucci into the role of communications director shows the rising power of political outsiders and the diminished influence of establishment figures -- which Priebus, the former chairman of the [RNC], epitomizes.

"One White House official and two outside advisers said that while Scaramucci was brought into the White House for the communications job, he's considered an internal candidate to eventually succeed Priebus as chief of staff. There are also a handful of outside candidates. The unexpected hire has raised questions of whether more shake-ups are coming, even as the White House has tried to downplay its internal discord. The instability has made it difficult for the administration to fend off questions about ties between Trump's 2016 campaign and Russia and to move forward an embattled legislative agenda.

"Despite frequent reports his position is in jeopardy, Priebus hopes to finish out his year, according to people close to him. He is eyeing another big hurdle this week of getting the health care bill to pass through the Senate, defenders said Sunday."

<http://politi.co/2vQJKFN>

SUSAN PAGE in USA TODAY: "Just six months after his inauguration, Americans already are split down the middle, 42%-42%, over whether President Trump should be removed from office, a new USA TODAY/iMediaEthics Poll finds."

<https://usat.ly/2ttWDVq>

NYT'S LISA FRIEDMAN: "Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, traveled to his home state, Oklahoma, 10 times over three months this year, largely at taxpayer expense, according to a report released Monday.

"The findings from the Environmental Integrity Project, a nonprofit group founded by former E.P.A. officials, are drawn from Mr. Pruitt's calendar and the travel expenses he has submitted for reimbursement. Obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, the documents show Mr. Pruitt spent 43 out of 92 days from March through May in Oklahoma or traveling to or from the state." <http://nyti.ms/2uP4Vvn>

FROM THE PRESIDENT ... : at 4:09 p.m.: "As the phony Russian Witch Hunt continues, two groups are laughing at this excuse for a lost election taking hold, Democrats and Russians!" ... **at 4:14 p.m.:** "It's very sad that Republicans, even some that were carried over the line on my back, do very little to protect their President."

... at 7:57 p.m.: "It's hard to read the Failing New York Times or the Amazon Washington Post because every story/opinion, even if should be positive, is bad!" ... **at 8:01 p.m.:** "If Republicans don't Repeal and Replace the disastrous ObamaCare, the repercussions will be far greater than any of them understand!" ... **at 8:23 p.m.:** "Thank you to @LOUDOBBS for giving the first six months of the Trump Administration an A+. S.C.,reg cutting,Stock M, jobs,border etc. = TRUE!"

BARAK RAVID in Haaretz, "Trump Envoy Jason Greenblatt to Arrive in Israel on Monday in Bid to De-escalate Temple Mount Crisis": "A senior official in the Trump administration said that Greenblatt is heading to the region 'to support efforts to reduce tensions in the region.' During his Israel visit, Greenblatt is expected to be in contact with Trump's senior adviser Jared Kushner and keep him updated on the contents of his

talks." <http://bit.ly/2uriUEH>

-- **WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING**, Israel sent an emissary to Jordan after an Israeli security guard killed two people who tried to attack embassy personnel. Israel also closed its embassy and consulates in Turkey due to controversy over stepped up security at the al Aqsa mosque.

BEHIND THE SCENES -- SUSAN GLASSER: "The Trump White House's War Within": "Last Monday, President Trump's senior Cabinet officials and top national security advisers met for a contentious meeting to finally agree on a new strategy for America's longest war. After months of wrangling, they would ask Trump for a modest troop increase and a more intense commitment to the seemingly endless struggle in Afghanistan.

"But the session of the National Security Council Principals Committee, described by two sources briefed on it as a 's*** show' that featured what a third source, a senior White House official, confirmed was a heated debate where 'words were exchanged,' proved no more successful than months' worth of previous Afghan policy debates. Trump refused to sign off on the plan they approved, the sources said, instead sending it back to his national security team demanding more work. ...

"Trump's hesitation is also, according to multiple current and former senior U.S. officials I've spoken with in recent days, a striking vote of no-confidence in his national security adviser, H.R. McMaster, who has been trying and failing for months to sell the president on a new plan for Afghanistan. McMaster has made a major policy review of America's long, failed war there his personal mission, according to the sources, and he pushed hard to get a new strategy that would include the relatively modest troop increases and a commitment to at least another four-year timeline approved in advance of Trump's May summit with NATO allies. But instead, the sources said, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson teamed up with Mattis to block McMaster's initial version, which they believed Trump and political advisers wary of the war, notably chief strategist Steve Bannon, would not support without clearer markers of success." <http://politi.co/2uPVfjF>

-- Glasser also spoke with Laurel Miller, who recently stepped down as acting special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, for the Global POLITICO Podcast.

Transcript <http://politi.co/2tDider> ... **Listen and subscribe** <http://apple.co/2kAoZfH>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER was in town on Friday, and he sat down for 45 minutes with Isaac Dove for the next episode of the Off Message podcast, coming Tuesday. "I wish we could do like John Travolta with Saturday Night Fever, where he starts dancing. He's disco dancing and then all of a sudden, within one year, you have a million more discotheques all over the world," he said. "You wish that you could do the same thing with the environmental issues or in the redistricting or good government practice."

On what he thinks of people like Joe Scarborough leaving the GOP because of

Trump: "There's love it and leave, or love it and change it. And I believe in changing. Because in my heart, I'm a Republican. So all of the original Republican principles, I'm with that." Schwarzenegger wants there to be a third party, but not sure if he'd get involved: "I would have to see who is involved because a lot of times, you see those Independents and those are wacky guys also. So you've got to be careful who you bring to bed with you. ... Jesse Ventura started out great, but then he became a forehead. I don't know. Something happened." And here's what he said when Isaac asked him why he thinks he seems to get under Trump's skin: "I think he maybe sees me on the same level, or he feels threatened by that. I could not even tell you." ***Subscribe to get the full interview*** <http://apple.co/2kJqk3D>

YIKES! -- "Local governments keep using this software -- but it might be a back door for Russia," by WaPo's Jack Gillum and Aaron C. Davis: "Local and state government agencies from Oregon to Connecticut say they are using a Russian brand of security software despite the federal government's instructions to its own agencies not to buy the software over concerns about cyberespionage, records and interviews show. The federal agency in charge of purchasing, the General Services Administration, this month removed Moscow-based Kaspersky Lab from its list of approved vendors. In doing so, the agency's statement suggested a vulnerability exists in Kaspersky that could give the Russian government backdoor access to the systems it protects, though they offered no explanation or evidence of it. Kaspersky has strongly denied coordinating with the Russian government and has offered to cooperate with federal investigators." <http://wapo.st/2uXR8mo>

THE JUICE ...

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Rational360's digital team did an analysis of all members of Congress' Twitter accounts and figured out which reporters and media organizations members followed the most. The top 10 reporters: Chad Pergram, Mike Allen, Chuck Todd, Jake Tapper, Ed O'Keefe, Dana Bash, Manu Raju, Bret Baier, Jake Sherman and Chris Cillizza. <http://bit.ly/2uPk7rJ>

-- FROM MORNING MONEY: LAUNCHING TODAY - John Dearie emails: "I left the Financial Services Forum at the end of June to launch a new 501(c)(3) organization called the Center for American Entrepreneurship (CAE), which will launch ... Monday ... CAE's purpose is to work with policymakers in Washington, and the state and local levels across the country, to enhance policy circumstances for new business formation, survival, and growth. ...

"[W]e currently have funding from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Visa, Wells Fargo, UPS, Bank of America, and Goldman Sachs, and are talking with many others."

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "Dacha fights for a second beer garden on 14th

Street," by WaPo's Rachel Chason. <http://wapo.st/2vR6buw>

Playbook Reads

EZRA COHEN-WATNICK PROFILE -- ROSIE GRAY in The Atlantic, "The Man McMaster Couldn't Fire: Thirty-one year old Ezra Cohen-Watnick holds the intelligence portfolio on the National Security Council -- but almost everything about him is a mystery": "Despite his prominent, and apparently quite secure, position in Trump's NSC, little is known about Cohen-Watnick, who had spent much of his short career as a low-ranking official at the Defense Intelligence Agency. Information about him in publicly available sources is scarce. Few higher-ups from the DIA remember him. Only one picture of him can be found online, a snapshot unearthed by AI-Monitor's Laura Rozen. Unlike other White House officials who have become public figures in their own right, Cohen-Watnick never speaks for himself publicly, leaving others to fill the void. ... Some profess not to know him, or ask why anyone would want to write about him. Others simply refuse to discuss him. 'I won't talk to any journalist about Ezra,' said Michael Ledeen, a Flynn confidant who knows Cohen-Watnick well. 'Is it one of your hit pieces?' asked Bannon." <http://theatlantic.com/2017/02/20/ezra-cohen-watnick-profile/517000/> ... **Pic of Ezra** <http://bit.ly/2uP8fGw>

TWO GOOD NEW YORKER pieces that just popped -- **"Weathering the Storm:** In a summer of disasters, London's first Muslim mayor works to preserve Europe's global city," by Sam Knight: Sadik "Khan is a student of American politics, and in describing the role of religion in his public identity he often paraphrases John F. Kennedy: he is not a Muslim mayor; he is a mayor who happens to be Muslim. He allays your concerns before they have a chance to form. Khan characterizes himself as a feminist. He is the first mayor to walk in the city's gay-pride march. But he is also conscious that he has an obligation to talk about and demystify Islam. ... He will quote passages from the Quran and the Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet, when discussing terrorism." <http://bit.ly/2vQFRRp>

-- **"Guilty Pleasure: How TV created Donald Trump,"** by Emily Nussbaum: "As it happens, most episodes of Trump on 'The Apprentice' are curiously hard to find: they're not available to stream or download. Only first-season DVDs are for sale, legally, online- and only used ones. The show is not at the Paley Center for Media's research library, either. (M-G-M, which owns the rights, declined to comment.) ... Rewatching 'The Apprentice' more than a decade later, it's easy to see why it struck a chord. Glossy and upbeat, the show, which debuted after 9/11 but before the economic collapse, introduced itself as a stirring advertisement for Wall Street as a meritocracy. Each episode opens with the earworm 'For the Love of Money,' by the O'Jays, with its 'moneymoneymoneymoney" groove: 'Talk about cash money! / Dollar bills, y'all.'" <http://bit.ly/2uo8mrA>

KNOWING MARK MEADOWS -- "Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows takes a seat at the top table," by the Washington Examiner's Al Weaver:

<http://washex.am/2uPKX3d>

-- **INTERESTING NUGGET:** Kellyanne Conway on the support Meadows and his wife gave Trump after the Access Hollywood tape last October: "We will always remember how tenacious and loyal Mark and Debbie Meadows were, especially after Oct. 7. They're definitely members of what we call the 'Oct. 8th coalition.'"

<http://washex.am/2uPUIUp>

BUSINESS BURST -- "Wall Street Outlasts Congress on Banker Pay, But Still Loses," by WSJ's Telis Demos and Dave Michaels: Trump administration regulators have signaled they want to abandon long-simmering plans to further regulate pay on Wall Street. But aspects of the Dodd Frank law passed in 2010 under President Barack Obama along with changes in the economics of the banking industry have already resulted in tighter compensation controls. Portions of the Dodd-Frank mandate-including making pay more sensitive to risk and long-term results-have made it into guidelines adopted by the Federal Reserve and other agencies. Banking groups have said their members follow the guidelines, but Washington and Wall Street have wrangled for years over whether they need to be locked in with formal rules.

"**Last week, regulators** including the [SEC] dropped efforts to craft those tougher provisions from their published agendas. Those proposals included longer deferment periods for bonuses and longer periods of time during which the payouts are subject to potential claw backs. An SEC spokesman declined to comment on the changed agenda. But Republican lawmakers and regulatory officials have long complained that Dodd-Frank included many measures unrelated to the financial crisis that spurred its passage." <http://on.wsj.com/2unDZ4A>

OLIVIA NUZZI with her third cover story for NYMag, "**Donald Trump Is Not Invited to the Wedding:** Joe, Mika, and their star-crossed relationship with the president":

"Because Joe and Mika are perhaps the only masochists alive who operate on this schedule and spend this much time together (a 6-to-9 a.m. show; up as late as 10 p.m., crisscrossing the Northeast corridor for meetings, events, and speeches), it can feel as though they exist in their own private universe. Except they don't. Between them breathes a sprawling web of three ex-spouses and six children, ranging in age from 9 to 29 (Scarborough quietly divorced his second wife in 2013, while Brzezinski's marriage ended in 2015).

"**It has historically been a preoccupation** for them, then, to keep the matter of their relationship and its inconvenient origins out of the press, which they achieved with near-total success - something one New York tabloid veteran told me was astonishing and 'a lesson for everyone' in how to 'tame the gossips.' 'I think of the gossip world as extremely transactional, and they were very good at dealing with it,' the veteran told me. 'They are total operators: They weren't above trading one item for another. They took their own PR into their own hands.'" <http://nym.ag/2uoHJTE> ... **The cover**
<http://bit.ly/2eH8Gw6>

MEDIAWATCH -- "New York Times requests apology from Fox on ISIS story," by David Cohen and Hadas Gold: "The New York Times on Sunday took the unusual step of requesting an apology from a competitor, asking 'Fox & Friends' to retract a report that the Times was to blame for the 2015 escape of an ISIS leader. Fox subsequently updated the story on its website with the NYT letter. 'I am writing on behalf of The New York Times to request an on-air apology and tweet from Fox & Friends in regards to a malicious and inaccurate segment 'NY Times leak allowed ISIS leader to slip away,' wrote Danielle Rhoades Ha, vice president of communications for the Times."
<http://politi.co/2eGvs7p>

-- "How Trump Got It Wrong in Saying The Times 'Foiled' Killing of ISIS Leader," by NYT's Michael R. Gordon: <http://nyti.ms/2tT5UWN>

TV TONIGHT -- "The Beat with Ari Melber," premieres tonight at 6 p.m. on MSNBC. Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) will be the show's debut guest.

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sean Spicer relaxing yesterday afternoon at the Army Navy Country Club pool ... Sen. Marco Rubio and his family enjoying the activities at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's "Superhero Family Day" on Saturday (h/t Laura Lott, president and CEO of the American Alliance of Museums) ... Rep. Luke Messer and family yesterday walking into morning service at McLean Presbyterian Church ... Peter Baker and Susan Glasser at a book party in his honor at Harris Miller and Deborah Kahn's house in northern Virginia, where Peter was born and raised. Former Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.) and Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.) also attended ... Joe Lieberman last night at Penn Station in Baltimore boarding the Acela for D.C.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- **Brandy Zadrozny**, senior reporter/researcher at The Daily Beast and **Gregory Zadrozny**, a senior art director at Showtime, welcomed Veda Louise Zadrozny, their third child. Veda joins 6 year old Sky and one year old Wilder.
Pics <http://bit.ly/2uOLJxJ> ... <http://bit.ly/2eH9LUJ>

TRANSITIONS -- MGM Resorts International hired **Debra DeShong** as VP of global industry affairs. She most recently served as EVP and managing director of public affairs at Subject Matter. ... **Brink Lindsey**, most recently the VP for research at the Cato Institute, is joining the Niskanen Center as VP and director of the Open Society Project. ...

... **Tom Koonce**, an executive director at JPMorgan Chase, is joining the bipartisan lobbying firm Rich Feuer Anderson in August. The firm has Amazon, BlackRock, PwC and SWIFT as clients. ... **Vinay Vijay Singh** is joining KPMG as director of global infrastructure. He was previously deputy assistant secretary at the International Trade Administration in the Obama Commerce Department.

WEEKEND WEDDING -- "Jeremy Bearer-Friend, Thomas Gillespie" -- N.Y. Times:

"Mr. Bearer-Friend, 34, was, until recently, the tax counsel in the Washington office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts. In August, he is to begin an appointment as an acting assistant professor of taxation at New York University School of Law. He graduated magna cum laude from Brown, and received a Master of Arts in education from the University of California, Berkeley, and a law degree from Stanford. ... Mr. Gillespie, 30, is the assistant director of children's programming at PBS in Arlington, Va. He graduated from the College of William & Mary. ... The couple met in June 2013 through OkCupid." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2tAOblD>

-- **POOL REPORT** from Alex Halpern Levy: "At a historic train depot overlooking the Ohio River, Jeremy, Tommy and a revelrous crew of family and friends from all over the country drank Kentucky bourbon, ate split pea samosas, and danced to the beat of the Beastie Boys. Guests included a large contingent of Warren staffers, the NYT's Dana Goldstein, and a table of former Senate pages (Tommy once worked as a Mitch McConnell page)." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2uYL8tE> ... **Video of Jeremy breaking the glass** <http://bit.ly/2tClauA>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Joel Benenson, founder and CEO of Benenson Strategy Group. **How he got his start in politics:** "Left the NY Daily News in 1994 to work as communications director for then-New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, a giant in Democratic politics. I wanted to be the guy in the room, not the guy writing about the room." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2uZ5Rh4>

BIRTHDAYS: Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) ... political cartoonist Pat Oliphant ... Marc Racicot, former RNC chair and Montana governor ... AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka ... Ryan Sims ... WSJ's Kim "Potomac Watch" Strassel ... John Brabender, chief creative at BrabenderCox ... CNBC's Eamon Javers ... Jennifer Sarver ... Rob Anderson ... Robert Hoopes, president of Vox Global (h/t Josh Alcorn) ... Juergen Baetz, DPA's Africa bureau chief ... Magee Quick McBride, VP at Jefferies ... Mike Sugerman, journalist at CBS in New York (h/t Jon Haber) ... Kathleen Hennessey, WH editor at the AP ... Rep. Andy Barr (R-Ky.) ... Emily Casarona ... Kerri Briggs of ExxonMobil ... Eli Center ... Chris Bond, communications director for House Majority Whip Steve Scalise ... Michelle Kessel, producer for ABC's "Nightline" ...

... **Barbara Morgan**, former communications director for Anthony Weiner, who is now living and working in Denver ... Sarah Citrenbaum ... Rep. Charlie Crist (D-Fla.) ... Greg Hittelman, comms director at the Enough Project ... former Rep. Vin Weber (R-Minn.) ... Trey Hollern of Porter Novelli ... Colin Peppard ... Will Holloway ... Carmen MacDougall ... Dan Reilly ... Stephen Dinan ... Brian Mooar ... Politico's Katherine Ragsdale ... David Fuscus, president/CEO of Xenophon Strategies ... Maryann Sedlack ... Courtney Carlson (h/t Mom, Margaret) ... Dan Slater ... VJ Sahi ... Jessica Doyle ... Olivia Morgan ... Beth Scully (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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By Marianne LeVine | 04/13/2018 03:57 PM EDT

With David Beavers, David Pittman and Garrett Ross

AS TRUMP ATTACKS AMAZON, TECH GIANT REMAINS PART OF COALITION ON POSTAL REFORM: President **Donald Trump's** order to audit the U.S. Postal Service is widely viewed as an indirect attack on tech giant **Amazon**. Earlier this month, Trump tweeted: "I am right about Amazon costing the United States Post Office massive amounts of money for being their Delivery Boy." But it's worth noting that Amazon is part of the **Coalition for a 21st Century Postal Service**. According to the coalition's website, its goals include "supporting and working toward restoring financial stability to the nation's postal system" and "advocating legislation that would contribute to or accomplish such financial stability." In addition to Amazon, the coalition's members include **eBay**, **FedEx** and **Verizon**. Disclosures show that the coalition retains **Sackler Brinkmann & Hughes** and **Williams & Jensen** to lobby on postal reform. It's unclear so far how the Trump administration's executive order on postal reform will affect the goals of other companies pushing for legislative changes to the postal service.

- **Art Sackler**, the manager of the coalition, told PI that Trump's task force is "a good thing in terms of drawing more intense national attention to the extreme situation of the Postal Service, but they've only got 120 days to do this. ... Coming up with a real set of recommendations to constitute a plan for reform for restructuring ... is going to take a lot more time and effort than that." He noted that the coalition is pushing for Congress to pass bipartisan legislation in the House and Senate for Postal Service reform before the end of the year. When asked whether other coalition members were concerned about Amazon's participation in the group, he said that "nobody's expressed any concerns about Amazon. ... Everybody is pleased that they're as committed to reform as the rest of us." Asked to comment on the president's tweets, Sackler said: "We hope their differences can be resolved amicably. Amazon is a huge customer of the Postal Service, and the regulatory commission certainly thinks Amazon is not only paying its way but is making a contribution."

- But some think that Amazon's participation in the coalition could hurt the chances of postal reform. A K Street source familiar with the issue told PI that Amazon "has become a political liability for any legislative effort that ultimately requires the president's signature."

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. I am flying solo this week while Theo enjoys a much-deserved week off. Tips always welcome: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

TODAY'S FILINGS: Pharmaceutical giant **AbbVie Inc.** hired a trio at **Baker & Hostetler** to lobby on health care regulations and reimbursement issues. Former Rep. **Charles Boustany Jr.**

(R-La.), who earlier this week registered his first client since retiring from Congress in 2017, added a second Friday: ABIR, the **Association of Bermuda Insurers & Reinsurers**. In addition to Boustany, **Jennifer Fogel-Bublick**, **David Olander**, **Bob Brooks** and **John Raffaelli** will lobby for the trade group on tax and financial services issues.

- Coal company **Peabody Energy Corporation** hired three at **Capitol Tax Partners** to lobby on the "impact of tax reform on international mining companies," per the disclosure filing. And, as Pro's **David Pittman** covered in POLITICO Pulse this morning, **CVS** hired a team including former Rep. **Frank Guinta** (R-N.H.) at **ML Strategies** to lobby on issues related to pharmacy benefit managers and opioid policy. Guinta, who was rumored as a possible pick to be Trump's "drug czar" last year, worked in the insurance industry before running for public office, and joined ML Strategies last month, Pittman writes.

- Aerospace and defense giant **United Technologies Corporation** hired a team of seven at **Squire Patton Boggs** that includes former Sens. **Trent Lott** (R-Miss.) and **John Breaux** (D-La.) and former Rep. **John Kingston** (R-Ga.). The group will lobby for United Technologies on its planned acquisition of U.S. aviation company **Rockwell Collins**, per the disclosure filing.

COSTELLO ASKS MCCORMICK GROUP TO HELP WITH JOB HUNT: Rep. Ryan Costello (R-Pa.) has tapped **The McCormick Group's Ivan Adler** and **John Hesse** to help him land his next gig. Costello, who announced his retirement last month, came to Congress in 2015.

COHEN NEGOTIATED \$1.6M SETTLEMENT FOR BROIDY: "President Donald Trump's personal lawyer negotiated a deal in late 2017 to pay \$1.6 million to a former Playboy model who said she was impregnated by a top Republican fundraiser, according to people familiar with the matter," **The Wall Street Journal's Joe Palazzolo** and **Michael Rothfeld** report. "**Michael Cohen**, whose office, home and hotel room were raided by federal agents this week, arranged the payments to the woman on behalf of **Elliott Broidy**, a deputy finance chairman of the Republican National Committee with ties to Mr. Trump, the people familiar with the matter said. Mr. Broidy, a Los Angeles-based venture capitalist, works on the Republican committee with Mr. Cohen, who is also a national deputy finance chairman.

- "The deal, which hasn't previously been reported, prohibits the Los Angeles woman from disclosing her alleged relationship with Mr. Broidy in exchange for \$1.6 million to be paid to her over two years in quarterly installments, these people said. The first payment was due Dec. 1, according to one of the people. 'I acknowledge I had a consensual relationship with a Playboy Playmate,' Mr. Broidy said in a statement provided by a spokesman. 'At the end of our relationship, this woman shared with me that she was pregnant. She alone decided that she did not want to continue with the pregnancy and I offered to help her financially during this difficult period.'" Full story.

TWO TRUMP OFFICIALS LOBBIED FOR BILLIONAIRE WITH TIES TO RUSSIAN OLIGARCH: "Two senior Trump administration officials were once registered as lobbyists for an investment company controlled by a Soviet-born industrialist who made billions doing business with newly sanctioned Russian oligarchs," **VICE News' Greg Walters** reports. "**Makan Delrahim** is now the assistant attorney general for the Antitrust Division in the

Department of Justice, after rising from his original appointment as deputy White House counsel and deputy assistant to the president. **David Bernhardt** is the No. 2 official in Trump's Department of the Interior. Both men registered as lobbyists in 2011 and 2012 for **Access Industries**, a holding company controlled by billionaire **Leonard Blavatnik**, according to public filings reviewed by VICE News. And though they are far from the only D.C. lobbyists to get plum jobs in the Trump administration, the connection to Blavatnik, long in business with billionaire associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin, reveals yet another link between Russia and senior Trump officials." [Full story.](#)

HART PRESSURED TO RETIRE EARLIER: "The lobbyist who rented Environmental Protection Agency Administrator **Scott Pruitt** a room in his Capitol Hill townhouse is being pressured to retire from his firm earlier than previously planned," **The Daily Beast's Asawin Suebsaeng** and **Sam Stein** report. "**J. Steven Hart**, the chairman of Williams & Jensen, had been considering leaving this year, four sources familiar with his thinking said. But the emergence of the scandal surrounding his association with Pruitt has expedited talk of his departure as officials at the powerhouse lobbying shop grapple with the resulting bad press. Hart is under pressure internally to make a quicker break amid concern that his continued presence on the firm's masthead has become problematic for certain clients. But others inside Williams & Jensen do not want to give off the impression that Hart acted improperly in renting a townhouse to Pruitt - an implication that would come should he leave the firm in the midst of the Pruitt-related fallout.

"One source told The Daily Beast that no final decision is imminent. But another said that exit plans have already been discussed between Hart and other members of the firm's brass." [Full story.](#)

MAVERICK PAC ADDS TWO CHAIRS: **Maverick PAC**, a Republican group that aims to get young conservatives involved in the political process, has two new chairwomen for its Women's Coalition: **Colleen McKnight** and **Libby Wuller**. McKnight is a litigation associate at **Foley Gardere/Foley & Lardner LLP**, and Wuller is director of external engagement at **Quorum Analytics**. In an interview with PI, **Morgan Ortagus**, national co-chairwoman of **Maverick PAC**, said that the coalition is all about "how do we find young women running for federal office around the country [and] how do we support them."

SPOTTED: At **Glen Echo Group's Yuri's Night** space party Thursday night, **Glen Echo's Maura Corbett**, **Ellen Satterwhite** and **Amy Schatz**, **Michael Petricone** of the **Consumer Technology Association**, **Jacqueline Klimas** of **POLITICO**, **David Goldman** with the House Energy and Commerce Committee, **David Don** and **Brian Josef** of **Comcast**, **Laurent Crenshaw** of **Eaze**, **Evan Swarztrauber** of the FCC, **Zach Graves** of **R Street Institute**, **Mike Purdy** of **Google**, **Tony Romm** of **The Washington Post**, **Blair Levin** of the **Brookings Institution**, **Margaret McCarthy** of **Mobile Future**, **Ben Brody** and **Naomi Nix** of **Bloomberg**, **Michael Calabrese** of the **New America Foundation**, **Christian Dawson** of the **i2Coalition** and **Svetlana Matt** from the office of Rep. **Jerry McNerney** (D-Calif.).

SPOTTED: Thursday night at an opening party for **WestExec Advisors**, co-founded by **Michèle Flournoy**, **Tony Blinken**, **Nitin Chadda** and **Sergio Aguirre**: former Obama White

House chief of staff **Denis McDonough**, former Obama national security adviser **Susan Rice**, former Obama national security adviser **Tom Donilon**, former Obama homeland security adviser **Lisa Monaco**, former Deputy Defense Secretary **Robert Work**, United Arab Emirates Ambassador to the U.S. **Yousef Al Otaiba**, Finland Ambassador to the U.S. **Kirsti Kauppi**, former Obama White House communications director **Jen Psaki**, former Obama deputy national security adviser **Avril Haines**, former Assistant VA Secretary for Policy and Planning **Raul Perea-Henze**, among others.

ON THE CALENDAR: ACLU's membership conference will include speeches from Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), **Planned Parenthood** President **Cecile Richards**, **Black Lives Matter** co-founder **Patrisse Cullors**, ACLU President **Susan Herman**, ACLU Executive Director **Anthony Romero** and **Equal Justice Initiative's** founder and executive director, **Bryan Stevenson**. The conference takes place June 10 -12.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS: None

NEW PACs:

Conservative Republican Victory Alliance (super PAC)
Country Over Party PAC (super PAC)
Millennial Voice PAC (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Baker & Hostetler LLP: AbbVie, Inc.
Capitol Counsel, LLC: Abir
Capitol Tax Partners, LLP: Peabody Energy Corporation
Health and Medicine Counsel of Washington: Lymphatic Education & Research Network
J.A. Green and Company (formerly LLC): GN Hearing
J.A. Green and Company (formerly LLC): Mark Barnes & Associates on behalf of Dillon Aero
J.A. Green and Company (formerly LLC): NovoCarbon, Inc.
J.A. Green and Company (formerly LLC): US Ordnance
ML Strategies, LLC: CVS Health
MSLGROUP Americas, Inc., d/b/a Qorvis MSLGROUP: Alexander Skorobogatko and Alexander Ponomarenko
National Environmental Strategies: Millennium Bulk Terminal Longview LLC
Polsinelli PC: IsoRay Inc.
Squire Patton Boggs: United Technologies Corporation
The Advocacy Group: CBT Nuggets, LLC
The Normandy Group, LLC: City of San Antonio, TX
Vizcaya Trade Strategies: American Bar Association - Section of IP Law
Winning Strategies Washington: Longevity Health Plan

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

American Capitol Group: TacSat Networks
Cassidy & Associates, Inc. (formerly known as Cassidy & Associates): Squaw Valley
Cogent Strategies LLC: One Concern, Inc.
The CJR Group, Inc.: City of Shaker Heights

Alpine Group, Inc.: Zix Corporation
Cassidy & Associates, Inc. (formerly known as Cassidy & Associates): Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Cassidy & Associates, Inc. (formerly known as Cassidy & Associates): ThyssenKrupp Presta
Greenberg Traurig, LLP: CSC Sugar LLC
Greenberg Traurig, LLP: Mississippi Silicon Holdings LLC
Meguire Whitney, LLC: Madison Gas and Electric
Mr. David Gencarelli: Beachbody Com (Formerly Product Partners LLC)
Mr. David Gencarelli: Mobile Medical International Corporation Inc
The Majority Group, LLC: Nrs
American Continental Group: Dollar Coin Alliance
Lincoln Policy Group: Palmetto Group On Behalf Of Parsons Corporation

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2018/04/13/as-trump-attacks-amazon-tech-giant-remains-part-of-coalition-on-postal-reform-169948>

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From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Thur 9/21/2017 3:03:40 PM
Subject: RE: Fall Media

Jahan – Regarding the Wash Post 202 Breakfast, since it can't change once we set it, I'm hesitant about Nov. 1 based on our scheduling meeting yesterday and some pending travel that week. Is Oct 25 too early to do it? He will definitely be in DC that day so no chance of moving (well, you know, much less chance). If that's too early, then we could do Nov 7 pretty safely. Let me know which works best and how that affects the rest of the requests below.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

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Office of the Administrator

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From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2017 3:40 PM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Subject: Fall Media

Below is our Fall Media To-Do-List.

The big event will be the Washington Post's Daily 202 Breakfast with James Hohmann and Juliet Eilperin. Once we settle on a date (and the time has to be at 9:00 – 10:00 AM) then we really can't move that as they advertise and make it public about that interview. This is something we want to do at the end of October or very early November.

In terms of the other events, everything is very flexible but we want to have some type of rhythm of events to check-off in the fall and they won't be confirmed with the reporter until the week before (meaning we can cancel them). This list has been approved by Liz.

THE FALL MEDIA TO-DO LIST

October 11, 2017: Wall Street Journal / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / EPA

October 17, 18, 19 or 20, 2017: Time Magazine with Justin Worland / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / EPA

October 18, 2017: Hugh Hewitt MSNBC / 30 Minutes / EPA (Believe this is already scheduled)

October 24, 2017: Bloomberg / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / EPA

October 25, 2017: Breitbart / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / EPA

October 31, 2017: Washington Examiner with Paul Bedard / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / EPA

November 1, 2017: Washington Post's Daily 202 Breakfast / 60 Minutes (40 On-The-Record) / The Washington Post; 1301 K Street NW

November 8, 2017: Reuters / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / EPA

TBD (prefer October): Oklahoman in Oklahoma City

TBD (prefer October): Tulsa World in Tulsa

TBD (mid-October or November): Print Interview with NTK Network / 30 Minutes (15 On-The-Record) / Rosslyn, Virginia

TBD (October, November or December): Radio Interview with Resurgent's Gabriella Hoffman

TBD (October, November or December): Print Interview with the Washington Free Beacon

TBD (November or December): CBS News' The Takeout With Major Garrett

Time Magazine's Profile With Justin Worland

WHAT: Profile story in Time Magazine

WHY: Time Magazine is doing a profile on Scott Pruitt with or without our participation. We have decided to do this interview, but have also requested that it be a podcast as well, so that all of the audio is available from the interview.

The Washington Post's Daily 202 Breakfast With James Hohmann & Juliet Eilperin

WHAT: "The format would be a 40-minute, onstage interview with James at The Washington Post's HQ in D.C. The interview will be entirely conversational, no need for any prepared statements or opening remarks. We would anticipate a live audience of approximately 200 attendees, including senior staff from Congress and the administration, policy experts, business executives and academics. In addition to the in-room audience, we'll also live stream and post video of the conversation across The Washington Post and its digital platforms, including Facebook Live, which regularly draw well-over 100k live viewers."

WHY: The Daily 202 is the most-read newsletter in the country. This platform will provide over 100,000 live viewers. Pruitt has a really good relationship with Juliet Eilperin and James Hohmann is a very fair reporter.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: This interview will be at the Washington Post before 200 invited guests. There will be security, along with plain clothes security and invited guests must show identification to enter the event.

PREVIOUS GUESTS: Secretary Wilbur Ross, Kevin McCarthy and Scott Walker.

CBS News' The Takeout With Major Garrett

WHAT: "The Takeout" is a weekly podcast about politics, policy and pop culture hosted by CBS News Chief White House Correspondent Major Garrett and CBS News Political Director Steve Chaggaris. Listeners can expect context and analysis of the week's political news in a casual format that allows for expanded conversation with a newsmaker. Each episode is recorded over a meal at a Washington, D.C. restaurant.

WHY: Administrator Pruitt has a previous relationship with Major Garrett.

PREVIOUS GUESTS: White House Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, Corey Lewandowski, former Governor Martin O'Malley.

The Washington Examiner's Paul Bedard

WHAT: Paul Bedard is a longtime D.C. reporter joined the Washington Examiner in 2012 after penning U.S. News & World Report's premiere political column, "Washington Whispers," for more than a decade.

WHY: Bedard is a conservative who holds the media accountable and can also write about the EPA's Back-To-Basics Agenda.

PREVIOUS GUESTS: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

The Wall Street Journal with Tim Puko and Eli Stokols

WHAT: On-the-record interview with the Wall Street Journal's Tim Puko and Eli Stokols about the EPA's Back-To-Basics Agenda.

Bloomberg Interview with Jennifer Dlouhy, Jennifer Jacobs and Ari Natter

WHAT: Similar to our interview with Reuters, this would be a wide-ranging interview with Bloomberg which is not only read by industry officials but also serves as a wire service.

Reuters Interview with Valeria Volcovici

WHAT: Similar to our interview with Reuters from June, this would be a wide-ranging interview with Reuters.

Hugh Hewitt on MSNBC

WHAT: Hugh Hewitt hosts a television show on MSNBC and this would be a taped interview for his program.

WHY: It's an opportunity to appear on MSNBC while also talking with a conservative ally.

PREVIOUS GUESTS: National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, HUD Secretary Ben Carson and Senator Tom Cotton

NTK Interview with Jeff Bechdel

WHAT: Need to Know (NTK) Network is a news outlet founded by former Mitt Romney campaign manager Matt Rhoades and former RNC Research Director Joe Pounder. This interview will consist of 5 questions, which we will receive ahead of time.

WHY: Pruitt has also mentioned that he'd like to meet Matt Drudge and Rhoades is one of the closest people to him.

•□□□□□□□ “[Matt Rhoades] is an expert at manipulating the news cycle with a coveted connection to the elusive media power broker Matt Drudge.”

•□□□□□□□ “In 2008 (and 2012) that was how Mitt Romney was stronger than many people gave him credit for. (That coverage was attributed in no small part to Drudge's close working relationship with Romney campaign manager Matt Rhoades.)”

PREVIOUS GUESTS: Former Speaker Newt Gingrich

Radio Interview with the Resurgent's Gabriella Hoffman

WHAT: The Resurgent is a conservative website founded by Erik Erickson.

WHY: Good conservative outlet founded by conservative Erik Erickson.

PREVIOUS GUESTS: Senator Mike Lee, Congressman Dave Brat

Print Interview with Breitbart's Matt Boyle

WHAT: An interview with Breitbart's editor Matt Boyle

WHY: Good conservative outlet that is read throughout Washington, especially by mainstream reporters. Additionally, Breitbart has written a number of favorable stories for the EPA.

PREVIOUS GUESTS: President Donald Trump in the Oval Office.

Print Interview with the Washington Free Beacon's Liz Harrington

WHAT: An interview with the Washington Free Beacon, who writes favorable coverage regarding the work EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is doing at the EPA.

WHY: Good conservative outlet that also is syndicated on Fox News' website.

Print Interview with the Tulsa World's Randy Krehbiel

WHAT: An interview with the Tulsa World, regarding the work EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is doing at the EPA.

Print Interview with the Oklahoman's Paul Rand Monies

WHAT: An interview with the Oklahoman, regarding the work EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is doing at the EPA.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 7/10/2017 10:33:17 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Better Medicare Alliance: 3 VERY CONSEQUENTIAL WEEKS -- JAKE and ANNA are writing a book about Capitol Hill -- WHAT EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT: Trump Jr. met with Russian lawyer who promised dirt on HRC -- B'DAY: Sarah Boxer

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Better Medicare Alliance
07/10/2017 06:30 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Monday morning. WELCOME TO 3 VERY CONSEQUENTIAL WEEKS . Let's be brutally honest: there is a better than even chance Congress leaves town at the end of this month without a single major legislative achievement to talk about back at home. Not one. The Senate is squirming on health-care reform, and faces long odds in their quest to pass an overhaul to Obamacare. The \$1-trillion infrastructure plan that, seven weeks ago, the Trump administration promised would be out in the "next several weeks" has not come out. Tax reform is still in the hearing phase, and the Trump administration still says it will be done by the end of the calendar year.

-- CRISIS MODE: DEBT CEILING UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN BEFORE AUGUST

RECESS: Capitol Hill has not been able to chart a path forward on lifting the nation's debt limit because of infighting in the administration about whether it should come with or without strings. **THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION** is pushing for Congress to take action before the August recess, but most Hill aides we speak to say it won't happen. **THE LIKELY GAMEPLAN, AS IT STANDS NOW:** the Senate will push a clean debt limit increase to the House in the fall, and after a day or two of squirming and posturing, the GOP will pass it with Democratic votes. Congress has until October to get this done, so hold your horses.

-- **GOV'T FUNDING** : Government funding needs to be reupped by the end of September. As of now, we've heard from people in the House and Senate that Congress will likely extend funding until December, and then fight over the rest of the year's funding in the final month of the year. That could impact tax reform, which, under the Trump administration's schedule, will also need to be finished by the end of the year.

-- THE TAKEAWAY: The year is quickly being eaten up by must-do housekeeping instead of big-picture legislating.

NEWS -- JAKE AND ANNA ARE WRITING A BOOK! Congress is the most exhilarating, exciting and juicy story in town. The backstory about how deals get done -- or don't get done -- is filled with intrigue, twists, turns and personality clashes. After more than seven years of talking about writing a book about Capitol Hill, we decided this is our time to do it. We'll chart the first two years of Trump's presidency, through the lens and prism of lawmakers and aides on Capitol Hill. This is a book about people and personalities, political chess and the battle for power in Congress. It's a snapshot of official Washington in the era of Donald Trump.

IN MANY WAYS, this is a book we've been writing in our head since 2010. Congress is an institution we've spent a lot of time observing, studying and thinking about. We hope you come along for the ride.

CROWN, which published our friends Jon Allen and Amie Parnes' books about Hillary Clinton, will publish our work. We anticipate it will be released in March of 2019 -- just months after the midterm elections. **DAVID LARABELL** and **RACHEL ADLER** of CAA represented us.

-- VANITY FAIR: "HOW POLITICO'S NEXT GENERATION TOOK OVER

WASHINGTON: Inside the transfer of power at Playbook, the most influential newsletter in politics," by Sarah Ellison. <http://bit.ly/2t4mz9b>

THE STORY EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT -- NYT'S JO BECKER, MATT APUZZO and ADAM GOLDMAN -- "Trump's Son Met With Russian Lawyer After Being Promised Damaging Information on Clinton": "President Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., was promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton before agreeing to meet with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer during the 2016 campaign, according to three advisers to the White House briefed on the meeting and two others with knowledge of it. The meeting was also attended by his campaign chairman at the time, Paul J. Manafort, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Mr. Manafort and Mr. Kushner recently disclosed the meeting, though not its content, in confidential government documents described to The New York Times. ...

"It is unclear whether the Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, actually produced the promised compromising information about Mrs. Clinton. But the people interviewed by The Times about the meeting said the expectation was that she would do so.

"When he was first asked about the meeting on Saturday, Donald Trump Jr. said that it was primarily about adoptions and mentioned nothing about Mrs. Clinton. But on Sunday, presented with The Times's findings, he offered a new account. In a statement, he said he had met with the Russian lawyer at the request of an acquaintance from the 2013 Miss Universe pageant, which his father took to Moscow. 'After pleasantries were exchanged,' he said, 'the woman stated that she had information that individuals

connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Mrs. Clinton. Her statements were vague, ambiguous and made no sense. No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information.'

"He said she then turned the conversation to adoption of Russian children and the Magnitsky Act, an American law that blacklists suspected Russian human rights abusers. The 2012 law so enraged President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia that he halted American adoptions of Russian children. 'It became clear to me that this was the true agenda all along and that the claims of potentially helpful information were a pretext for the meeting,' Mr. Trump said. Two people briefed on the meeting said the intermediary was Rob Goldstone, a former British tabloid journalist and the president of a company called Oui 2 Entertainment who has worked with the Miss Universe pageant. He did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment. Mark Corallo, a spokesman for the president's lawyer, said on Sunday that 'the president was not aware of and did not attend the meeting.'" <http://nyti.ms/2t4CRyN>

-- IF YOU'RE KEEPING SCORE: Washington Post's Roz Helderman and Tom Hamburger broke the story that Goldstone was the intermediary between Trump Jr. and the Russian lawyer.

-- SOMEONE GOT TO HIM! -- TRUMP at 8:45 last night: "The fact that President Putin and I discussed a Cyber Security unit doesn't mean I think it can happen. It can't-but a ceasefire can,& did!" ...

... **BUT, BUT, BUT: 22 HOURS AGO** the president said the cyber-security unit would be "impenetrable" and would prevent "election hacking" and "many other negative things."

***** **A message from BMA: HEALTH CARE POLICY ALERT:** We can all agree that high need, high cost patients deserve the right care. And with Medicare Advantage, seniors and people with disabilities are getting the high-value care they need through flexible benefits and specialized care. Learn more:
<http://www.bettermedicarealliance.org/special-needs-plans> *****

THE GOP DONOR PAPER -- WSJ EDITORIAL: "Putin Is Not America's Friend":

"We'll find out in the coming weeks how Vladimir Putin sized up Donald Trump in their first mano a mano meeting on Friday, but one bad sign is the Trump team's post-meeting resort to Obama-like rhetoric of cooperation and shared U.S.-Russia purposes. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson frequently lapses into this form of John Kerry-speak as he did trying to sell the new U.S.-Russia-brokered cease-fire in a corner of Syria. 'I think this is our first indication of the U.S. and Russia being able to work together in Syria,' Mr. Tillerson told reporters.

"He added: 'I would tell you that, by and large, our objectives are exactly the same. How we get there, we each have a view. But there's a lot more commonality to

that than there are differences. So we want to build on the commonality, and we spent a lot of time talking about next steps. And then where there's differences, we have more work to get together and understand. Maybe they've got the right approach and we've got the wrong approach.' The same objectives? The Russians want to help their client Bashar Assad win back all of Syria while retaining their military bases. If they are now talking about a larger cease-fire, it's only because they think that can serve Mr. Assad's purposes. The Trump Administration doesn't seem to know what it wants in Syria after Islamic State is ousted from Raqqa, and we hope Mr. Tillerson isn't saying the U.S. shares the same post-ISIS goals as Russia.

"Congress can play a fortifying role here by moving ahead with the bill toughening sanctions against Russia for its election meddling. The Senate passed the bill 98-2, and Republicans can move it quickly in the House with some fixes for oil investments. The White House objects that the bill takes away discretion from Mr. Trump to reduce sanctions unilaterally. But that discretion shouldn't be granted until Messrs. Trump and Tillerson show that they understand that Mr. Putin is not America's friend."

<http://on.wsj.com/2v2hU9f>

-- **THE WHITE HOUSE** has been working behind the scenes to try to exert influence over the Hill in regards to this sanctions bill. That is going to be increasingly difficult. This legislation can -- and probably will -- pass with veto-proof margins.

SUSAN GLASSER'S THE GLOBAL POLITICO -- "Does Trump Have a Point About Obama and Russia?: Tom Donilon, former national security adviser, says 'no doubt about it' Obama should have done more about Russia hacking of 2016 election": "Normally cautious, careful and exacting, Donilon argues that Obama as early as last summer should have made "aggressive public attribution" that Russia was responsible, long before the president ultimately did so last October just a few weeks before the election.

"Given the fact that they were attacking a fundamental element of our democracy, ' Donilon says in the interview, the Obama administration should have been 'pushing back harder and publicly' rather than worrying so much about appearing to use the national security apparatus for partisan ends or assuming a Clinton victory would end the matter. That 'would have been a better course of action, frankly.'"

<http://politi.co/2u3T6R5> ... **Subscribe** <http://apple.co/2kJ9q1U>

ALEX ISENSTADT SCOOPS: "President Trump's enemies list: The president remembers every political slight - and the politicians who abandoned him during the Access Hollywood scandal": "Donald Trump is less than six months into his presidency, yet one of the organizing principles of his political operation is already becoming clear: Payback. In private, Trump spoke of spending \$10 million out of his own pocket to defeat an incumbent senator of his own party, Jeff Flake of Arizona, according to two sources familiar with the conversation last fall. More recently, the president celebrated the attacks orchestrated by a White House-sanctioned outside group against another Republican senator, Dean Heller of Nevada, who has also been openly critical of him.

Fear of Trump reprisals has led one Republican congresswoman, Martha Roby of Alabama, to launch an intense campaign to win over a president who remembers every political slight." <http://politi.co/2v2zJ8m>

JONATHAN MARTIN and ALEX BURNS -- "Alabama's Special Senate Election Is All About Wooing Trump": "[T]he contest may boil down to a single question: How will President Trump respond to the candidate who denounced him for 'serial adultery'?

"The campaign for the Senate seat once held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions is ostensibly playing out between Muscle Shoals and Mobile Bay. But the battle is being waged just as fiercely inside the White House, where Mr. Trump's endorsement could determine who will serve as the state's junior senator for the next three years. The Republican race has pitted the current, appointed senator, Luther Strange, against Representative Mo Brooks, a conservative firebrand whose brash, anti-immigrant, pro-gun politics are distinctly Trumpian -- save that 'serial adultery' jab.

"That has created tensions between Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader who strongly backs Mr. Strange, and the West Wing, where some sympathies lie with Mr. Brooks. What Mr. Trump does will beam a message to his supporters well beyond Alabama about which Republican faction he favors: the pragmatic establishment or uncompromising hard-liners. And in Alabama, Mr. Trump's preference matters. He may be saddled with national disapproval ratings that no modern president has seen this early in an administration, but among Alabama conservatives, the president ranks up there with college football, air-conditioning and pork shoulder." <http://nyti.ms/2tYUEvW>

-- COMING ATTRACTIONS: "Mo Brooks in Senate Ad: Fund President Trump's Border Wall or Face Government Shutdown," by Breitbart's Matt Boyle: "Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL), a Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Alabama, is threatening to shut the government down in the U.S. Senate if his colleagues do not fund President Donald J. Trump's planned border wall along the U.S. border with Mexico. Mo Brooks, one of three major candidates in the race to succeed now Attorney General Jeff Sessions for Sessions' seat, made the threat in a new ad set to air statewide in Alabama on television soon." ***With the ad*** <http://bit.ly/2tyvX8N>

THE JUICE ...

-- DEFINERS PUBLIC AFFAIRS, founded by Matt Rhoades, Romney-Ryan 2012 campaign manager, and Joe Pounder, former RNC research director, is expanding to London. Its affiliate UK Policy Group will "produce campaign-style research, media monitoring, opinion research, and communications strategy advice for private sector clients." Trygve Olson of Viking Strategies and Andrew Goodfellow, former director of research for the Conservative Party will serve as UKPG's vice president. ... ***The Politico Europe story*** <http://politi.co/2sWh8Ox>

-- @JoePerticone: "Walking along Mass Ave, casually overhead Mitch McConnell

walking w/ wife Elaine Chao say 'I'd really like to get that Kennedy slot'"

-- **SAVE MY CARE** , which is working to stop the repeal of Obamacare, is launching what they say is a "seven-figure TV ad buy" in Alaska, Nevada, Maine and West Virginia to target Lisa Murkowski, Dean Heller, Susan Collins and Shelley Moore Capito. The ad urges the senators to "keep your promise, vote no on health care repeal." **Nevada** <http://bit.ly/2tYZklx> ... **Alaska** <http://bit.ly/2tydokS> ... **Maine** <http://bit.ly/2sVYCG8> ... **West Virginia** <http://bit.ly/2u3V9nY>

#PLAYBOOKLOYAL: It's been one year since we took over Playbook and we want to thank you for reading. We want to hear from you -- so we're creating a competition. The prize: a signed copy of one POLITICO's Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Matt Wuerker's famous cartoons. **HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:** Tweet or post a message to us on Facebook using the hashtag #PlaybookLoyal -- each time you post with the hashtag will increase your chances of winning! Post as often as you wish from today until Friday, July 14. So get to sharing and tell us why you're #PlaybookLoyal and include this link <http://politi.co/2IBIFIV>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Iraqi Special Forces soldiers celebrate after reaching the bank of the Tigris river as their fight against Islamic State militants continues in parts of the Old City of Mosul, Iraq on July 9. | Felipe Dana/AP Photo

THE RESISTANCE -- "Obama returns to politics with redistricting group fundraiser," by Isaac Dove: "Barack Obama will make the first official political move of his post-presidency on Thursday, headlining a private fundraising for the National Democratic Redistricting Committee at a private home in Washington. The event, which will also be attended by NDRC chair Eric Holder and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, is to support the group he's helping back to coordinate Democratic efforts in state races and lawsuits to push back on Republican success in gerrymandering over many cycles. In many statehouses and Congress, that's left Democrats at a baked-in disadvantage." <http://politi.co/2u3ED7N>

TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE -- "The Scholar Who Will Help Lead Trump's Assault on Rules," by NYT's Steve Eder: "When George Mason University changed the name of its law school last year to honor Antonin Scalia, the late conservative Supreme Court justice, the tribute rankled many liberal faculty members and students. ... One outspoken advocate for the name change was Neomi Rao, an associate law professor who had come to know Mr. Scalia while serving as a clerk for Clarence Thomas, another conservative member of the court. ... [Q]uietly, Ms. Rao also worked to win over liberal critics. In a public relations coup, she helped secure an endorsement for the

name change from Ruth Bader Ginsburg, one of the Supreme Court's most liberal justices and a longtime friend of Mr. Scalia. ...

"Ms. Rao's ability to work both sides of the ideological divide, emblematic of her career in academia and government, is about to be tested anew. On Monday, the Senate is expected to approve Ms. Rao's nomination to lead an obscure but powerful White House agency called the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs - placing her at the heart of President Trump's politically contentious agenda to overhaul government rules and regulations." <http://nyti.ms/2tyPYfn>

JOSH GREEN with an excerpt from his new Bannon book in NYMag, **"Attack, Attack, Attack:** Why does Trump double-down every time it seems like he should retreat? Because Steve Bannon is back in his boss's good graces": "On May 22, just as a strange photo of President Trump, Saudi king Salman, and Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi touching a glowing orb reached the apex of its memehood, Steve Bannon, who was lurking somewhere beyond the orb's glow, got on a plane in Riyadh and flew back to his book-stuffed apartment in a glass high-rise in Arlington, Virginia. ... His former position largely restored, Bannon is now back in his natural element, at the center of the chaos. He modeled Trump's war room after the one set up by Bill Clinton to handle Ken Starr's Whitewater probe. Bannon was convinced that Trump needed his own Lanny Davis - Clinton's pit-bull lawyer and TV surrogate - to go against Mueller, according to a source familiar with his thinking. (Bannon even called Davis to consult him.) ...

"Despite his portrayal as Trump's Rasputin, Bannon's return was prompted less by his own influence than by the president's needs. ... Bannon is less 'The Great Manipulator' than Trump's indispensable henchman, the man he turns to when everything's going to hell. Bannon is astute enough to discern Trump's desires and heedless enough to carry it out. 'If the whole White House is backed up against the wall facing a firing squad, Steve will stay there,' says Ken Cuccinelli, president of the Senate Conservatives Fund. 'Reince [Priebus] and the other guys will run.'" <http://nym.ag/2tES1N7> ... **\$21.90 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2utkR30>

LARRY SUMMERS in the FT, "Donald Trump's alarming G20 performance": "A corporate chief executive whose public behaviour was as erratic as that of Mr Trump would already have been replaced. The standard for democratically elected officials is appropriately different. But one cannot look at the past months and rule out the possibility of even more aberrant behaviour in the future. The president's cabinet and his political allies in Congress should never forget that the oaths they swore were not to the defence of the president but to the defence of the constitution." <http://on.ft.com/2tYR98N>

******* A message from BMA: MEDICARE ADVANTAGE TAILORED CARE MEETS THE NEED OF HIGH COST, HIGH NEED CARE SENIORS:** 18.5 million seniors and people with disabilities choose Medicare Advantage for one reason: it gives them the affordable, robust, and individualized health care they need. And with health needs in this country becoming more complex, it's clear that innovative, holistic solutions are

required.

Under Medicare Advantage, Special Needs Plans (SNPs) specializes care for the health care system's fastest growing and most costly and complex care beneficiaries - frail, disabled, and chronically-ill Medicare beneficiaries. SNPs tailor benefits, provider networks, and prescription drug coverage to best meet the needs of the beneficiaries they serve. In addition to providing Traditional Medicare benefits, SNPs also provide reduced cost sharing and enhanced benefits related social services, wellness and home care. SNPs are designed to address complex conditions by providing better access to specialized care for those who need it most. Learn more:

<http://www.bettermedicarealliance.org/special-needs-plans> *****

MEDIAWATCH -- RESTUCCIA, COOK and MCCASKILL TO W.H. TEAM -- CARRIE BUDOFF BROWN emails the staff: "Since the start of the year, our White House team has delivered a nonstop diet of powerful coverage dominating attention in Washington and around the world. ... We've been looking for ways to build on that success and are excited to announce several additions to the White House team from within our ranks: Andrew Restuccia and Nancy Cook, who helped anchor our coverage of the Trump transition and the mechanics of the new administration as senior policy reporters, and Nolan McCaskill, who has brought a keen sense of observation to coverage of Trump world from his perch on the breaking news desk."

JIM ACOSTA PROFILE -- "'Grandstanding' or truth teller? CNN's Acosta walks a fine line with Trump," by WaPo's Paul Farhi: "At a time when CNN is under attack by President Trump and his supporters, Acosta has been fighting back. He has said on the air that White House press secretary Sean Spicer's unresponsive answers were rendering him 'just kind of useless' as a credible source; that the ever-briefer briefings have become 'basically pointless'; that covering this White House has at times been like 'covering bad reality television.' ... He has repeatedly needled Spicer on Twitter, too: 'I can't show you a picture of Sean,' he tweeted, over a photo of his ankles, during a blacked-out briefing on June 19. 'So here is a look at some new socks I bought over the wknd.'" <http://wapo.st/2u8Pii6>

-- "How Antitrust Undermines Press Freedom," by News Media Alliance president and CEO David Chavern in WSJ: "Whenever President Trump attacks CNN or berates the Washington Post, journalists and free-speech advocates rise up to defend the media and the First Amendment. Meanwhile, a greater threat to America's news industry looms mostly unnoticed: Google and Facebook's duopolistic dominance of online advertising, which could do far more damage to the free press than anything the president posts on Twitter. ... The News Media Alliance, which represents digital and print publishers ... is proposing a solution: a new law granting a limited safe harbor under antitrust for publishers to negotiate collectively with dominant online platforms. This would grant media organizations the flexibility to expand innovative digital models of news distribution, while also giving them more ways to sustain high-quality journalism." <http://on.wsj.com/2u3nPhg>

Playbookers



<http://bit.ly/2sWCag5> ... National Intelligence

Director Dan and Marsha Coats exiting an armored vehicle (with security detail) for Sunday morning service at McLean Presbyterian Church. ... former Amb. Norm Eisen (and Obama's ethics czar) walking down 14th street yesterday holding a cactus yesterday - he was with his daughter.

TRANSITIONS - Jonathan Nabavi is joining the NFL as VP of public policy and government affairs. Nabavi most recently served as majority counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee and is a former college football player at Penn State. ... The Hispanic Leadership Fund has hired **Gus Portela** as its director of external affairs and operations. He previously served as political director and executive director of the College Republican National Committee.

... **Kate Leone** has been named SVP of government relations and a member of the executive team of Feeding America, an anti-hunger organization. She previously was general counsel for Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.). <http://bit.ly/2u3fzO8>

ENGAGED -- Caren Auchman, SVP at Fleishman-Hillard and former Dodd/GSA/Waxman flack, got engaged to **Aaron Bregman**, history teacher at Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. "He popped the question in a suite at the Mayflower Hotel, then insisted they rush to dinner - and in the hallway of the hotel were 14 of their closest friends ready to toast the couple. Engagement celebrations continued at Bibiana and Zaytinya until 1 a.m. The couple met in 2015 on JSwipe, a.k.a. 'Jewish Tinder.'" **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2t4psHe>

--**Chris Crawford**, program associate at Democracy Fund, on Saturday got engaged to **Carolyn VanBrocklin**, a communications specialist at Bethesda-based Concepts Inc., a small business that offers subject matter expertise in disability, employment, and veterans issues. The couple met at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown and he proposed outside Darlington House restaurant in Dupont Circle, where they went on their first date. **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2v1ZuWn> ... **Pic of the ring** <http://bit.ly/2u9cLQr>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Zachary Cohen (son of Politico's Joanne Kenen and Ken Cohen) got married to **Sam Greenberg** at Adas Israel on Sunday. They are both grad students at NYU Wagner School of Public Policy. They met via mutual friends five years ago when Sam was at Penn and Zach at Columbia. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2t4Axbd> (h/t Steve Rabinowitz)

-- "**Brahna Siegelberg, Richard Kreitner**" -- N.Y. Times: "The couple met while working as editors for the college newspaper at McGill University in Montreal, from which they graduated. The bride, 28, is an English teacher at the New York City Museum School in Manhattan. She received a master's degree in education from Hunter College. She is also a writer who has published articles in Slate and Tablet

magazines. ... The groom, 27, is an assistant editor in Manhattan for The Nation magazine." <http://nyti.ms/2sG1WAO>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): KP Trueblood, director of strategy for the ACLU and former budget director for HFA/director of ops for the Clinton-Kaine transition (hat tip: Lisa Vedernikova)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Julianna Smoot, co-founder of the Smoot Tewes Group, former Obama national finance director and W.H. social secretary. She celebrated with a party her husband, Lon Johnson, threw her in Detroit on Saturday. Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2tyShPH>

BIRTHDAYS: Sam Stein, recently hired by The Daily Beast ... Kenny Day, SVP of political at iHeartMedia ... Sarah Boxer, the pride of Stamford, Connecticut -- Politico's Matt Daily, Catherine Boudreau, Ashley Afranie-Saky, and John Appezzato ... former NYC Mayor David N. Dinkins is 9-0 ... Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) is 61 ... Rep. Brian Mast (R-Fla.) is 37 ... Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) is 62 ... former Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-Ga.) is 75 ... former Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-Mo.) is 59 ... Rena Shapiro, VP of politics and advocacy at BuzzFeed ... Emil Caillaux is 33 (h/t Katy Summerlin) ... Morgan Ortagus, a navy reservist, and an executive director at Ernst & Young ... Megan Ortagus ... Vice's Shawna Thomas ... Sam Harper, director in the public affairs and crisis practice at Burson-Marsteller (h/t Ben Chang) ... De Blasio alum Karen Hinton ... WSJ's Heather Haddon ... Rob Bogart ... Phillip Hedayatnia ... Grant Thomson ... Jamie Lockhart ... Peter Bondi ... Christine Turner, global policy at WhatsApp and an NSC alum ...

... **Remley Johnson**, former Defense Sec. Don Rumsfeld's chief of staff, is 26 (h/t Robert Flock) ... Morning Consult's Eli Yokley is 25. He celebrated this weekend with a house party on Friday night, brunch at Centrolina on Sunday (*Instapic* <http://bit.ly/2tEVRWB>) and birthday dinner at Bourbon Steak tonight (h/ts Lauren Weber and Evan Hollander) ... Caroline Ciccone, a managing principal on the communications team at Precision Strategies (h/t Tom Zigo) ... Bill Thompson, former NYC Comptroller ... Ian Rivera, campaign manager at Kopser for Congress and an HFA alum ... Amanda Woloshen ... Kevin Call ... Bill Roberts ... Debbie Palacios ... Sarah Hodgkins ... Caroline Gransee ... Mary Conlow (h/t Teresa Vilmain) ... Clay Haynes ... Chris Terris ... Max Blachman ... Tim Schlittner ... Kristin Chesemore ... Finlay Lewis is 79 ... Elie Jacobs ... Monty Warner ... Elizabeth Bartz ... Chuck Lewis ... JJ McCoy ... Edie Mead Holway ... Jeff Mitchell ... Arlo Guthrie is 69 ... Sofia Vergara is 44 ... Adrian Grenier is 4-0 ... Jessica Simpson is 36 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from BMA:** Better Medicare Alliance is helping to build the future of care through Medicare Advantage. As a community of experts, we're leading the way on health care through research, policy, and grassroots advocacy. Together, we're creating a path forward for innovative, modern health care. Stand with us:
<http://www.bettermedicarealliance.org/special-needs-plans> *****

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By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

BREAKING -- @nbcwashington: "We are heartbroken to announce that Jim Vance died this morning" at age 75: <http://bit.ly/2ulXcCh>

Good Saturday morning. SPOTTED: Paul Manafort in first class -- seat 1C -- on the 8 a.m. Delta shuttle this morning from New York to Washington. He was wearing a yellow and blue striped button-down shirt and black loafers with no socks and was reading his iPhone. He brought a coffee on the plane and ordered another cup upon takeoff. He's scheduled to talk to the Senate Judiciary Committee behind closed doors.

-- BACKGROUND: "Trump Jr. and Manafort reach deal with Senate panel to avoid public hearing," by CNN's Miranda Green and Manu Raju: "The leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee have cut a deal with President Donald Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., and former campaign chairman Paul Manafort to avoid being subpoenaed for a high-profile public hearing next week, with the two men agreeing to provide records to the panel and to be privately interviewed ahead of any public session. In a joint statement, panel Chairman Chuck Grassley and ranking member Dianne Feinstein said, '(W)e will not issue subpoenas for them tonight requiring their presence at Wednesday's hearing but reserve the right to do so in the future.' Feinstein tweeted later Friday evening, 'The Judiciary Committee will talk to Trump Jr. & Manafort before they testify in public, but we will get answers.'" <http://cnn.it/2uSMshG>

THE PRESIDENT is in Norfolk, Virginia, today for the commissioning of the USS Gerald R. Ford. **FROM POOLER** Franco Ordonez of McClatchy: "A change of clothes, including a pair of golf shoes, were brought on to Marine One before POTUS boarded." Traveling with the president: Reince Priebus, Steven Mnuchin and his wife.

BEHIND THE SCENES, from the indefatigable Josh Dawsey: "**Inside the 24 hours that broke Sean Spicer**: Trump's beleaguered press secretary had been in better spirits recently. Then Scaramucci had an Oval Office meeting": "Sean Spicer came to the White House on Thursday completely unaware President Donald Trump was planning to meet with Anthony Scaramucci, a longtime Wall Street friend, and offer him the job of communications director. Other top aides, including Reince Priebus and Steve Bannon, also had no clue. ...

"Spicer thought he had succeeded in reducing his public footprint. One friend said he seemed to be returning to a more normal version of himself, with less stress and more positive things to say about other people. He had told friends he liked being away from the podium and working on longer-term issues, like tax reform, and had told others how well the White House was going to handle the issue under his stead. And he was coping relatively well with the stress of serving as both press secretary and communications director after Mike Dubke resigned in May.

"Spicer had been spotted laughing and drinking with friends, colleagues and reporters at various events such as embassy parties and the Trump International Hotel. He seemed at peace with Trump's erratic behavior. 'He just kind of said, it is what it is, it is what it is,' said one person who spoke to him recently. 'I think he felt like he was getting to a place where he was going to take a lower profile and be successful and actually think about things long term.'" <http://politi.co/2ukpbE1>

-- KEY POINTS: NYT'S MAGGIE HABERMAN and GLENN THRUSH: "If the moves amounted to a kind of organizational reset, it was not part of a pivot or grand redesign. The president, according to a dozen people familiar with the situation, meant to upgrade, not overhaul, his existing staff with the addition of a smooth-talking, Long Island-bred former hedge fund manager who is currently the senior vice president and chief strategy officer at the Export-Import Bank, which he joined just last month. His rapport with the president establishes a new power center in a building already bristling with rivalry.

"Despite the move, the immutable reality of the Trump White House remains the same: The president has no intention of changing his behavior -- he merely believes his communications staff needs to defend him better -- and Mr. Scaramucci even suggested his role would be to unshackle an already unfettered president." <http://nyti.ms/2tpkuFP>

LEAD OF THE DAY - BRUTAL! -- WSJ's Mike Bender: "Less than a month into his new job, White House press secretary Sean Spicer needed to keep his food and drink cold. He wanted a mini-fridge. He dispatched a top aide to a nearby executive office building where junior research employees are crammed into a room, surviving on Lean Cuisine frozen lunches. Mr. Spicer wants your icebox, the aide said, according to people familiar with the incident. They refused to give it up. So Mr. Spicer waited until sundown--after his young staffers had left--to take matters into his own hands. He was spotted by a fellow White House official lugging the icebox down the White House driveway after 8

p.m." <http://on.wsj.com/2vvzLXo>

POINT/COUNTERPOINT: THE PRESIDENT has a former Goldman Sachs president as NEC director. His secretary of state is a former oil executive. His son in law -- who inherited a fortune from his father -- is in charge of Middle East peace and government reform. His new communications director is a former Wall Street executive who has not worked one day in government -- or in communications. If there's one thing we've seen **bolded and underlined** in the last six months is that government experience, while not sexy, is oftentimes useful.

-- **BUT, BUT, BUT:** He understands what the president wants to hear and is willing -- and able -- to defend him. Check out this statement from his maiden press briefing yesterday: "I have seen this guy throw a dead spiral through a tire. I've seen him in Madison Square Garden with a topcoat, standing in the key, hitting shots. I don't see this guy as a guy that is ever under siege. He's a very, very competitive person." Relevant? Not really. But the president loves loyalty and adoration. And he's already getting it from Scaramucci.

-- **"Scaramucci, repeatedly denied a White House role, finally sees a reward,"** by Ben White: "White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and President Donald Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon confronted Anthony Scaramucci in the West Wing on Friday morning, threatening to block the financier's appointment as Trump's communications director. Scaramucci laughed it off, according to a person familiar with the exchange, because he knew something they didn't: He already had the job." <http://politi.co/2tPAQqG>

COMING ATTRACTIONS - ANTHONY SCARAMUCCI is scheduled to be at Politicon next weekend in California in one of his first big public appearances since he got his new job. He'll be interviewed Saturday afternoon by Toure "about why we need Trump and what we miss when we refuse to listen." <http://bit.ly/2uJsHbY>

-- **BY THE WAY:** Jake and Anna are moderating a Politicon panel at 3:30 p.m. next Saturday called "Trump vs. the Media." **On the panel:** Bill Kristol, Jason Miller, Jon Lovett and Symone Sanders.

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** {Video} It's crucial to educate policymakers on how businesses really work and operate, something small business owner Robert Jones and other retailers describe as "light bulb" moments. [Watch Robert's story.](#) *****

THE LATEST, WAPO A1: "Sessions discussed Trump campaign-related matters with Russian ambassador, U.S. intelligence intercepts show," by Adam Entous, Ellen Nakashima and Greg Miller: "Russia's ambassador to Washington told his superiors in Moscow that he discussed campaign-related matters, including policy issues important to Moscow, with Jeff Sessions during the 2016 presidential race, contrary to public assertions by the embattled attorney general, according to current and

former U.S. officials.

"Ambassador Sergey Kislyak's accounts of two conversations with Sessions -- then a top foreign policy adviser to Republican candidate Donald Trump - were intercepted by U.S. spy agencies, which monitor the communications of senior Russian officials both in the United States and in Russia. Sessions initially failed to disclose his contacts with Kislyak and then said that the meetings were not about the Trump campaign.

"One U.S. official said that Sessions -- who testified that he has no recollection of an April encounter -- has provided 'misleading' statements that are 'contradicted by other evidence.' A former official said that the intelligence indicates that Sessions and Kislyak had 'substantive' discussions on matters including Trump's positions on Russia-related issues and prospects for U.S.-Russia relations in a Trump administration."

<http://wapo.st/2eDEh1L>

SARAH ISGUR FLORES: "Obviously I can't comment on the reliability of what anonymous sources describe in a wholly uncorroborated intelligence intercept that the Washington Post has not seen and that has not been provided to me." Isgur Flores added that Sessions stood by testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee last month when he stated he "never met with or had any conversations with any Russians or any foreign officials concerning any type of interference with any campaign or election." <http://politi.co/2uK0SQZ>

-- **"Trump's options on Russia probe: Discredit, pardon, fire,"** by Darren Samuelsohn: <http://politi.co/2gRH7Bd>

NEXT WEEK -- The House is taking up Russia, North Korea and Iran sanctions.

WHAT'S ON THE PRESIDENT'S MIND -- at 6:33 a.m.: "A new INTELLIGENCE LEAK from the Amazon Washington Post, this time against A.G. Jeff Sessions. These illegal leaks, like Comey's, must stop!" ... **at 6:45 a.m.:** "The Failing New York Times foiled U.S. attempt to kill the single most wanted terrorist, Al-Baghdadi. Their sick agenda over National Security" ... **at 6:52 a.m.:** "This morning I will be going to the Commissioning Ceremony for the largest aircraft carrier in the world, The Gerald R. Ford. Norfolk, Va." ...

... **at 7:35 a.m.:** "While all agree the U. S. President has the complete power to pardon, why think of that when only crime so far is LEAKS against us. FAKE NEWS" ... **at 7:44 a.m.:** "So many people are asking why isn't the A.G. or Special Council looking at the many Hillary Clinton or Comey crimes. 33,000 e-mails deleted?" ... **at 7:47 a.m.:** "...What about all of the Clinton ties to Russia, including Podesta Company, Uranium deal, Russian Reset, big dollar speeches etc." ... **at 8 a.m.:** "My son Donald openly gave his e-mails to the media & authorities whereas Crooked Hillary Clinton deleted (& acid washed) her 33,000 e-mails!" ...

... **at 8:10 a.m.:** "In all fairness to Anthony Scaramucci, he wanted to endorse me 1st, before the Republican Primaries started, but didn't think I was running!" ... **at 8:17 a.m.:** "The Republican Senators must step up to the plate and, after 7 years, vote to Repeal and Replace. Next, Tax Reform and Infrastructure. WIN!" ... **at 8:23 a.m.:** "ObamaCare is dead and the Democrats are obstructionists, no ideas or votes, only obstruction. It is solely up to the 52 Republican Senators!"

ACTUALLY, MR. PRESIDENT: Your guy is running the Justice Department, so you have some sway there if you want him to look into Clinton. And Senate Republicans are looking to dismantle Obamacare through budget reconciliation, which allows them to circumvent Democrats.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT -- JEN HABERKORN and SEUNG MIN KIM:

"Parliamentarian rules against key provisions in Obamacare repeal bill:

Republicans plan to vote next week on whether to begin debate on Obamacare repeal": "Several key provisions in the Senate's Obamacare repeal and replace bill, including language targeting Planned Parenthood, may have to be stripped or could be eliminated on the Senate floor by Democrats because they don't comply with budget rules, according to Democrats on the Senate Budget Committee.

"The Senate parliamentarian advised Friday in an informal and preliminary ruling that key conservative agenda items, including defunding Planned Parenthood for one year and banning coverage of abortion in Obamacare insurance plans, do not comply with Senate rules on reconciliation, the fast-track procedure the GOP is using to repeal Obamacare." <http://politi.co/2uSQjvh>

-- MORE FROM JEN AND SMK: "McConnell's last ditch strategy: The Senate leader is forcing doomed Obamacare vote - and backlash could revive it": "Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is taking the rare step of forcing his members to take a tough vote on an Obamacare repeal bill, H.R. 1628 (115), that is on track to fail, making them own their votes. Senior Senate Republicans believe the high-profile vote expected Tuesday - followed by conservative backlash over the GOP's failure to fulfill its seven-year campaign pledge - might provoke enough heat from the base to bring senators back to the negotiating table. It seems like a long shot. But McConnell may be playing the long game - making his members walk the plank not as an act of desperation but as part of a strategy that just might work." <http://politi.co/2tPxdRz>

JOSH MEYER AT THE ASPEN SECURITY FORUM -- "Former spy chiefs tear into Trump": "Two former top U.S. intelligence officials tore into President Donald Trump on Friday, saying in sometimes personal terms that Trump has shown disrespect for intelligence officials and a distasteful affinity for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and warning he may be endangering U.S. national security. The two former Obama administration officials, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper and former CIA director John Brennan, also strongly defended their response to Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election against criticism that they had not sufficiently punished Putin.

"I think we did pretty damn well ... there was no playbook for this,' Brennan said, adding that he 'threw a high, hard one' at his Russian counterpart in a phone call last summer warning the Russians to stop interfering in the election. 'This is uncharted seas that we were trying to navigate,' Clapper added. Both men endorsed the creation of a law requiring regular disclosures to Congress of foreign cyber intrusions before U.S. elections.

"But it was a sustained critique of Trump that dominated their joint appearance before an audience of national security insiders panel discussion here at the Aspen Security Forum in Aspen, Colorado. Noting that he had served six presidents, Brennan said that Trump's actions on the world stage had raised 'serious questions about how he is keeping safe our national security.'" <http://politi.co/2tyY74U>

THE HIDDEN HAND -- "The untouchable Hope Hicks," by Annie Karni: "Hope Hicks was celebrating a family wedding at a Bermuda golf club the weekend after Donald Trump was elected president when she overheard members of another party expressing dismay about his victory. The young press secretary was off duty, but she couldn't help inserting herself into the conversation at the next table. 'I promise, he's a good person!' Hicks chimed in, begging them not to worry, according to multiple people who witnessed the exchange.

"Hicks' instinctual defense of the president is emblematic of how she views her role in the White House: as someone who deeply understands Trump, but also understands why, in her mind, people misunderstand him. The polite, soft-spoken 28-year-old newbie to Washington politics holds the lofty title of director of strategic communications, pulls down the top White House salary of \$179,700 - the same as strategist Steve Bannon and chief of staff Reince Priebus - but operates outside of any organizational chart.

"She is protected, in a world of rival power centers, by the deep bond she shares with the man at the top. He affectionately refers to her as 'Hopester.' She still calls him 'Mr. Trump.' And she views her job, ultimately, as someone who is installed where she is in order to help, but not change, the leader of the free world. But an explosive Trump interview this week with the New York Times, in which Hicks was the only aide in the Oval Office with the president, has thrust her protected and preferred under-the-radar status into fuller view." <http://politi.co/2uLbjDe>

OOPS! -- "In revised filing, Kushner reveals dozens of previously undisclosed assets," by WaPo's Jonathan O'Connell, Matea Gold, Drew Harwell and Steven Rich: "Jared Kushner failed to disclose dozens of financial holdings that he was required to declare when he joined the White House as an adviser to President Trump, his father-in-law, according to a revised form released Friday. A separate document released Friday also showed that Kushner's wife, presidential daughter Ivanka Trump, had been paid as much as \$5 million from her outside businesses over an 84-day span this spring around the time she entered the White House as a senior adviser and pledged to distance herself from her private holdings. Kushner's new disclosure, released by the White

House, detailed more than 70 assets that his attorneys said he had inadvertently left out of earlier filings. ...

"Between March 9 and May 31, Ivanka Trump made between \$1 million and \$5 million from a trust valued at more than \$50 million that now holds her fashion business's collection of shoes, clothes, handbags and other goods. The business earned her more than \$5 million between January 2016 and March 2017, disclosures show. Ivanka Trump also listed receiving \$2.4 million in hotel-related revenue from the Trump International Hotel in Washington. She said she earned \$787,500 from a publisher's advance for her book 'Women Who Work,' which debuted in May."
<http://wapo.st/2uK2mdR>

REMEMBERING JOE RAGO - WSJ's Jennifer Levitz: "Joseph Rago, a Pulitzer Prize winning editorial writer at The Wall Street Journal who was known for his richly reported pieces and influence on policy makers, was found dead Thursday evening at his home in Manhattan. He was 34 years old. ... Mr. Rago was found with no obvious signs of trauma and emergency responders declared him dead at the scene, the police said. The cause of death was being determined by the medical examiner on Friday. ... Mr. Rago made his biggest mark writing about health care. In 2011, he captured the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing for what the Pulitzer organization called his 'well crafted, against-the-grain editorials challenging the health care reform advocated by President Obama.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2uSw1Sz>

THE JUICE ...

-- **SPOTTED:** Lara Trump on the 2 p.m. Delta shuttle from D.C. to New York Friday. Secret Service and New York police met her when she got off the shuttle at LaGuardia.

-- **HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP** is holding a fundraiser for honorary special guest Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.) Wednesday. Speaker Paul Ryan, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Chief Deputy Whip Patrick McHenry, Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers and NRCC Chairman Steve Stivers are listed as featured guests for the event where hosts are committed to give or raise \$5,000 and PACs are expected to give \$1,000 to attend.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former White House press secretary Sean Spicer walks down the steps of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building towards the White House on July 21 in Washington, D.C. | Alex Brandon/AP Photo

ELI LAKE in Bloomberg View, **"Trump's 'Axis of Adults' Is Breaking Apart:** If you thought grownups like Mattis, McMaster and Tillerson were secretly running the administration, think again": "McMaster [has a] precarious position at the six-month

mark of the Donald Trump administration. Behind the scenes, McMaster has had trouble replacing career staffers with new people from the Pentagon and the State Department. Until recently, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defense James Mattis had blocked many career public servants in their departments from being detailed to the National Security Council. This meant, in practice, that officials who served in Barack Obama's White House who were supposed to return to their bureaucratic homes stayed on longer at the council than their initial terms. ...

"In the case of McMaster, administration officials tell me he is perceived not to be a reliable messenger of the president's wishes. What's more, administration figures tell me, principals including Tillerson, Mattis and CIA director Mike Pompeo have a direct line to Trump. They can go around McMaster and make their case on interagency disputes directly to the commander in chief. For a national security adviser, this dynamic is deadly." <https://bloom.bg/2uLyAVs>

MAGGIE HABERMAN interviewed by **DAVID REMNICK** for the "New Yorker Radio Hour" podcast -- On the atmosphere in the White House: "Look, we're used to a team of rivals. We are not used to a team of the Bloods and the Crips. Which is essentially what this is in the White House. I mean, these are rival gangs. ... I think I need to add in some new gang names, too, because Bloods and the Crips makes it sound like there are only two teams. There's something like six." ... On her future: "[T]here has to be, probably, an end date, but I don't know when it is. And I like what I do. So mostly my concern is figuring out the time constraints in terms of my family." <http://bit.ly/2uJU459> ...

Transcript <http://bit.ly/2gQPkWi>

WHAT EVERYONE IS ASKING -- "Yes, Trump Could Pardon Himself. Then All Hell Would Break Loose: It's never been tried. Here's how it could blow up his presidency, or blow up the system," by Richard Primus in POLITICO Magazine: "Here's one possible scenario. Suppose the president announces a self-pardon, and Republicans in Congress follow the script they've used until this point: They express concern at the behavior but make no serious move to punish the president for it. The legal effect of the pardon would then go untested for years. A pardon is a shield against a prosecution, and in the absence of a potential prosecution it has no work to do. As long as Trump is president, there won't be any prosecution to put it to the test, because a sitting president probably can't be prosecuted for a crime. ... After Trump leaves office, the self-pardon would be tested only if the next administration were inclined to prosecute Trump." <http://politi.co/2vKW22H>

FOGGY BOTTOM DRAMA -- "Trump Assigns White House Team to Target Iran Nuclear Deal, Sidelining State Department," by Foreign Policy's Jana Winter, Robbie Gramer and Dan De Luce: "After a contentious meeting with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson this week, President Donald Trump instructed a group of trusted White House staffers to make the potential case for withholding certification of Iran at the next 90-day review of the nuclear deal. The goal was to give Trump what he felt the State Department had failed to do: the option to declare that Tehran was not in compliance with the contentious agreement." <http://atfp.co/2tPCf0n>

POLITICO HAVANA! -- "Anxious Cubans count on Trump to not follow through," by Isaac Dove in Havana: "The Cuban government these days is a confused mess of anger, hope and resignation when it comes to the communist country's relationship with the United States. They love Barack Obama, but feel like he left them short with changes that didn't go as far as they could have. They hate Donald Trump, but relish how his revival of the Cuba-vs.-America routine has reconnected them to the Cuban people. They want American cash and credit to start freely flowing, but are worried about capitalism creeping in and completely rewiring their world. Most of all, they're anxious about whether - and how - Trump will follow through on his vague but stridently delivered promise last month to rip up Obama's policy of engagement and get tougher on the isolated island." <http://politi.co/2gSm69p>

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** The overwhelming majority of retailers are small businesses, with more than 98% of all retail companies employing fewer than 50 people. While small in size, their voices are loud and clear when fighting to be heard on decisions and policies that impact their businesses and the customers they serve every day. [Hear more industry stories on NRF's Retail Gets Real podcast.](#)

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker - **17 keepers** <http://politi.co/2uiSgQe>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-"Writers dish on scoops that slipped away," by Elon Green in Columbia Journalism Review - featuring David Fahrenthold, Tom Wolfe, Don Van Natta Jr. (whose birthday is today), Adrian Chen, Janet Malcolm, Spencer Ackerman, Mike Isaac, Greg Howard, Joel Anderson, Joe Hagan, Renee Montagne: <http://bit.ly/2uHPm8l>

-"How Uber's Hard-Charging Corporate Culture Left Employees Drained," by BuzzFeed's Caroline O'Donovan and Priya Anand: "After a highly publicized corporate meltdown this spring, Uber is working to repair a culture employees and observers say is aggressive, cutthroat, and demanding. But years of putting out fires 24/7, partying hard and working harder, and contending with volatile managers have taken a toll on the mental health of the white-collar workers who were instrumental to building the Uber empire." <http://bzfd.it/2tOIVvH>

-"The Living and the Dead," by James Verini in tomorrow's N.Y. Times Magazine: "In October, Iraqi forces set out to retake Mosul, one of Iraq's largest cities and ISIS's biggest stronghold in the country. It would take them nine months and cost thousands of lives." <http://nyti.ms/2vJqCK7>

-"Long on Trump," by Jessica Pressler in NYMag in January: "Wall Streeters like Anthony Scaramucci bet heavy on the would-be president back when that seemed like a pretty dumb investment. Bonus time!" <http://nym.ag/2jMrfh3>

--"**Let's Go to Jerusalem for Soup Again**," by Taffy Brodesser-Akner in Saveur: "Taffy Brodesser-Akner travels to Israel to reexamine the soup of her youth and the gap between memory, desire, and (ugh) reality." <http://bit.ly/2uiWh74>

--"**Open Burns, Ill Winds**," by ProPublica's Abrahm Lustgarten: "The Pentagon's handling of munitions and their waste has poisoned millions of acres, and left Americans to guess at the threat to their health." <http://bit.ly/2uiP9rj> (h/t Longform.org)

--"**Flying Solo**," by Jen Doll in Longreads: "Doll tries to make sense of a breakup that happened the day before a romantic vacation - and blindsided her in the same ways the presidential election did." <http://bit.ly/2vJgWin>

--"**The Brutal Rise of El Mencho**," by Josh Eells in Rolling Stone: "With El Chapo behind bars, an even more dangerous drug lord has emerged. On the hunt for Mexico's next-generation narco." <http://rol.st/2uiTOJN>

--"**What Goes Up**," by Jack Hitt in Epic Magazine: "The daredevil, his helicopter, the risk of flying too high, and the birth of modern news." <http://bit.ly/2uiBRJp>

--"**Alamo**," by Dan Solomon in Texas Monthly: "In a dark, uncertain time for the film industry, one man decided he'd had enough. His name is Tim League. His creation is the Alamo Drafthouse. And together, they're on a mission to make moviegoing fun again." <http://bit.ly/2ujJ2kV>

--"**The Unsettled**," by Jessa Crispin in The Outline: "It's easier than ever to live with no fixed address, but that doesn't come without a cost." <http://bit.ly/2gRfwjB>

--"**Unfight Club**," by Ian Leslie in Medium: "Seven ways to make Twitter safe for politics." <http://bit.ly/2tnJFZB>

--"**Under siege by liberals: the town where everyone owns a gun**," by Lois Beckett in The Guardian: "Nucla, Colorado, was founded by socialists before becoming a mining town. Now, as wealthy liberals with different values encroach, the town is fighting for its economic survival." <http://bit.ly/2uJz5zw>

--"**Growing Up As an Untouchable**," by Sujatha Gidla in LitHub: "Every day in an Indian newspaper you can read of an untouchable beaten or killed for wearing sandals, for riding a bicycle. In your own town or village, everyone already knows your caste. But how do people know your caste when you go elsewhere, to a place where no one knows you? There they will ask you: What caste are you? You cannot avoid this question. And you cannot refuse to answer. By tradition, everyone has the right to know." <http://bit.ly/2ul9SWv> (h/t The Browser)

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Arnold Schwarzenegger "pumping iron" Friday morning at Balance Gym's Foggy Bottom location. ... Michael Cohen Friday night at the Trump Hotel ... Eric Holder in the Acela lounge at Penn Station this morning.

OUT AND ABOUT -- OUTGOING MPAA Chairman and CEO Chris Dodd last night hosted a reception and screening of "Dunkirk" -- the trade association's final screening before it vacates the building temporarily for renovations. **Trailer** <http://bit.ly/2vEYbN3>

SPOTTED: Mary Margaret Valenti, Jeff Ballou, Richard Bates, Kent and Lucy Conrad, Jackie Dodd, Byron and Kim Dorgan, John Gibson, Dan and Rhoda Glickman, Carl Hulse, Al Hunt, Ted Johnson, Patrick and Marcella Leahy, Carol Melton, Joanna McIntosh, Sarah Polus, Mike Regan, Chip and Hallie Smith, Gordon Smith, Jim and Sylvia Symington, Mark Warner, and Bob Woodward and Elsa Walsh.

-- **Matt Lauer, EVP of Qorvis MSLGROUP** and Mercuria Energy, and Samantha Sault, VP of the U.S. Fashion Industry Association, hosted their second-annual Dead of Summer Party Friday night. Guests largely ignored the tongue-in-cheek "The Donald in the 80s" dress code in favor of more fashionable summer cocktail attire for drinks on the roof of The Hay-Adams followed by dancing at The Living Room, with music provided by DJs Heather Femia and Neal Keller. **SPOTTED:** Halah Al-Jubeir, Capri Cafaro, Chuck Conconi, Sam Dealey, Kenny Day, Kevin Chaffee, Janet Donovan, Linda Greene, Rich Leiby, Sean T. Miles, Nick Owens, Michael Petruzzello, Roxanne Roberts, Nick Swezey, Karin Tanabe and Kelly Jane Torrance.

ENGAGED -- Rachel Ryan, senior account supervisor in the international affairs practice of Qorvis MSLGROUP, recently got engaged to **Charlie McKell**, a media and public affairs consultant who works with global clients from Paris and London. Pool report: "Rachel and Charlie met in D.C. in 2013. In June 2014, Charlie moved to Benin to begin his service in the Peace Corps. He and Rachel dated long-distance until (after her three trips to West Africa and one malaria diagnosis) he finished his service in September 2016 and flew to Paris, where Rachel had been relocated. On a recent trip to London, Charlie asked Rachel to marry him and she said yes! ... The couple plan to get married in Jackson Hole, WY after her brother, Connor Ryan, returns from his Middle East Navy deployment in the fall of 2018." **Pics** <http://politi.co/2uJNjQM> ... <http://politi.co/2uiuQKE>

BIRTHDAYS: VA Secretary David Shulkin ... Reid Cherlin ... former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) ... former Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas), the nominee to be the next ambassador to NATO (h/t Arjun Mody) ... David Shuster, i24NEWS English anchor/managing editor ... Will Fischer ... Politico's Craig Howie and Vicki Nguyen ... Brookings' Tarun Chhabra ... Fox News' Alex Pappas ... Buzz Brockway ... well-connected lobbyist Michael DiRienzo (h/t Tim Burger) ... Caleb Smith, the Speaker's digital comms director ... Sarah Hummell, DCCC deputy political director ... Stephan Tisher ... Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.) ... former Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.) ... Whitney Headlee ... Meghan Sullivan ... AJ Jorgenson ... The Atlantic's Annie Lowrey ...

former Rep. Mike Ferguson, now at Baker Hostetler ... Sandra Hawthorne ... Adam Finkel ... Pew's Elise Shutzer ... Eugene Carpino ... HFA alum Amy Littleton ... Anne Szkatulski ... Brandt Anderson, LD for Rep. Jim Banks ... Breanna Chandler of Impact Hub Santa Barbara ... Lauren AbuAli ...

... **Don Van Natta Jr.**, ESPN senior writer and a NYT alum ... Sandra Perez Hawthorne, assistant director for corporate communications at LMI and a Burson and Levick alum, celebrating in Montreal at a family wedding (h/t Brian) ... Maor Cohen, who's attending Columbia Business School this fall and celebrating in the Philippines (h/t fiancée Katie Glueck) ... MinnPost's Sam Brodey ... Joy Lee, associate counsel for Americans for Prosperity, and former attorney to the 2016 RNC and the 58th Presidential Inaugural Committee, is 3-0 (h/t Sarah Belknap) ... Erin Perrine, press secretary for Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (h/t Nick) ... AP's Peter Prengaman ... Ceci Alvarez ... Eleni Tavlarides ... Kevin Eastman ... CNN's Terence Burlij ... Warren Bass, senior editor of WSJ's Review section (h/t Ben Chang) ... Shelly Porges ... Nathan Naylor ... Sarah Obenour ... Soren Dayton, SVP of digital advocacy at Hill+Knowlton Strategies ... Mike Gibson, president of Advocacy Group ... Mike Moffo ... Kerry Allen ... Travis Korson, SVP at Madison Strategies ... Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.) ... Sam Chiron ... Steven Bennett, VP and COO of Brookings ... Enrique Goni ... Arshi Siddiqui, partner at Akin Gump ... Mary Masserini ... Jeff Winmill ... Andrew Feinberg ... Gary A. Waters ... John Kim Cook ... Les MacDonald ... Maury Forman ... Marie Westfried ... Christine Patronik-Holder (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Fort Myers, Florida:

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: Anthony Scaramucci ... Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) ... Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.). Panel: Mary Katharine Ham, Jennifer Granholm, David Urban and Karine Jean-Pierre

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Anthony Scaramucci ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) ... Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) ... Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.). Panel: Dan Balz, Jamelle Bouie, Megan McArdle and Amy Walter

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: Anthony Scaramucci ... Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) ... Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.). Panel: Jason Chaffetz, Julie Pace, Gillian Turner and Juan Williams

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Preempted for British Open coverage

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Sarah Huckabee Sanders ... Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) ... Eric Bolling, Joshua Green, Sara Fagen, Maggie Haberman, Roland Martin

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Michael Shear, Molly Ball, Nia-Malika Henderson and Julie Hirschfeld Davis

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) ... Newt Gingrich ... Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) ... Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Panel: Ed Rollins and Ian Bremmer

--Fox News' "MediaBuzz": Anthony Scaramucci ... Mollie Hemingway ... Marie Harf ... Erin McPike ... Emily Jashinsky ... Carley Shimkus

--CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS": Anne Applebaum ... panel: Jonathan Freedland, Janan Ganesh and David Goodhart ... Julio Borges

--CNN's "Reliable Sources": Lydia Polgreen and April Ryan ... panel: Tara Palmeri, Scott Jennings and Tim O'Brien ... Alisyn Camerota

--Univision's "Al Punto": Venezuelan Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz ... Julio Cesar Chavez ... Pedro Ultreras ... Janet Murquia ... Alberto Athie

--C-SPAN: "The Communicators" : Steve Case ... "Newsmakers": Rep. Luke Messer (R-Ind.), questioned by the Wall Street Journal's Siobhan Hughes and Real Clear Politics' James Arkin ... "Q&A": David Garrow

--Washington Times' "Mack on Politics" weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2omgw1D>): CRTV host and Conservative Review columnist Steve Deace.

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** The overwhelming majority of retailers are small businesses, with more than 98% of all retail companies employing fewer than 50 people. While small in size, their voices are loud and clear when fighting to be heard on decisions and policies that impact their businesses and the customers they serve every day. [Hear more industry stories on NRF's Retail Gets Real podcast.](#)

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07/08/2017 09:27 AM EDT

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Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. SPOTTED: Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in a very good mood at Cafe Milano Friday night. He walked into the restaurant by himself.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP is continuing his meetings at the G-20. He returns to Washington at the end of the day. Earlier today, he and British Prime Minister Theresa May gave brief remarks. Trump said "they would have 'tremendous talks' and reach a very big 'a very powerful deal' on trade 'very very quickly,'" according to the pool report. Pooler Andrew Beatty of AFP noted: "in the corner of the room was a late TV, still on, but silent, showing Fox News."

-- **ON RUSSIA:** Trump said he had a "tremendous meeting" with Putin. According to the pool report: "POTUS did not answer a shouted [question] about whether Russia lied about his meeting yesterday."

-- **ON VISITING ENGLAND:** "I will be going to London." No details on when.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, known as Jokowi, also met Trump in a bilateral meeting room, saying it was "a great honor" to meet with him. "Jokowi spoke in English, wishing Trump 'warm greetings' from his 'millions of fans' in Indonesia. He said they all want to know is when Trump will go there. 'We'll get there, we'll get there. It's a place I'd like to go,' POTUS responded," per the pool. **NOTE:** Us too!

-- **ON TRADE:** "We're going to do a lot of trade deals," Trump said of working with Indonesia, according to the pool report. "We are going to do a lot of business."

-- **"Ivanka Trump Sat In for Her Father at the G-20 Leaders' Table,"** by Bloomberg's Craig Gordon (with a rare byline) in Hamburg: "A photo on Twitter shows Ivanka Trump sitting at her father's place, between Chinese President Xi Jinping and British Prime Minister Theresa May. One official who was watching the session said she has taken her father's place at the table on at least two occasions today and did not speak. A spokesman for Ivanka Trump said she had been sitting in the back of the room and then briefly joined the main table when the president stepped out." <https://bloom.bg/2sAgjqs> ... **Pic of Ivanka at the table** <http://bit.ly/2tTDC2n>

MOLLY K. MCKEW in POLITICO Magazine, **"Trump Handed Putin a Stunning Victory:** From his speech in Poland to his two-hour summit in Hamburg, the president seemed determined to promote Russia's dark and illiberal view of the world": "In very concrete terms, through speech and action, the president signaled a willingness to align the United States with Vladimir Putin's worldview, and took steps to advance this realignment. He endorsed, nearly in its totality, the narrative the Russian leader has worked so meticulously to construct. The readout of Trump's lengthy meeting with Putin included several key points. First, the United States will 'move on' from election hacking issues with no accountability or consequences for Russia; in fact, the U.S. will form a 'framework' with Russia to cooperate on cybersecurity issues, evaluating weaknesses and assessing potential responses jointly.

"Second, the two presidents agreed not to meddle in 'each other's' domestic affairs-equating American activities to promote democracy with Russian aggression aimed at undermining it, in an incalculable PR victory for the Kremlin. Third, the announced, limited cease-fire in Syria will be a new basis for cooperation between the U.S. and Russia; Secretary of State Rex Tillerson went so far as to say that the Russian approach in Syria-yielding mass civilian casualties, catastrophic displacement, untold destruction and erased borders-may be 'more right' than that of the United States." <http://politi.co/2uVCV5A>

MICHAEL CROWLEY in Hamburg: **"Trump's pursuit of friendship with Putin fulfills his campaign promise":** "When it comes to dealing with Russia, President Donald Trump is keeping his promise. As president, Trump has backed away from campaign promises to impose tariffs on China, scrap the Iran nuclear deal and quickly build a wall on the Mexican border. But nothing has deterred him from his vow to test the possibilities of diplomacy with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Not three federal investigations, not talk of impeachment -- not even his wife.

"First lady Melania Trump interrupted her husband's Friday meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin here at the G-20 summit in an unsuccessful attempt to end an unexpectedly long and chatty session between the leaders of two ostensibly hostile powers. 'We went another hour after she came in to see us,' Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told reporters in a briefing afterwards, with top White House and State Department aides looking on. 'There was such a level of exchange and engagement,' between Trump and Putin, he added, 'neither of them wanted to stop.'" <http://politi.co/2tAdZkC>

-- **@markknoller**: "You're hearing soundbites of Secy Tillerson describing the Trump/Putin Summit because the WH barred TV camera coverage of his briefing." ... **@RichardHaass**: "Differing US, Russian accounts of Trump-Putin bilateral is one reason you have an NSC aide attend important meetings as note taker" ... **@yashar**: "WATCH: Putin, clearly prepared for the meeting, gestures to journalists and says 'these are the ones hurting you?'" <http://bit.ly/2sQT8Mx> ...

... **@abbydphillip**: "In this version, you can hear Trump reply 'Yeah, they're the ones. You're right about that.'" ... **@Kasparov63**: "This photo already everywhere in Russian media (as was a similar one with Obama). Putin knows how to play this game. Trump reaching to him." <http://bit.ly/2u2WjAX>

***** **A message from Postmates**: Operating in over 200 cities across the United States - Postmates is an innovative, on-demand logistics platform, transforming the way goods move around towns by enabling anyone to have anything delivered to their door step within minutes, and driving over \$1B in goods and merchandise across its platform in 2017. <https://postmates.com> *****

THE STAKES -- "At G-20, world aligns against Trump policies ranging from free trade to climate change," by WaPo's Michael Birnbaum and Damian Paletta in Hamburg: "The growing international isolation of the United States under President Trump was starkly apparent Friday as the leaders of major world economies mounted a nearly united opposition front against Washington on issues ranging from climate to free trade. At a gathering of the Group of 20 world economic powers - normally a venue for drab displays of international comity - there were tough clashes with the United States and even talk of a possible transatlantic trade war.

"The tensions were a measure of Trump's sharp break with previous U.S. policies. They were also a warning signal of Washington's diminished clout, as the leaders of the other nations who gathered in Hamburg mulled whether to fix their signatures to statements that would exclude Trump or to find some sort of compromise. Two European officials said they were leaning toward a united front against Washington." <http://wapo.st/2sAnE9p>

-- **"G20 communique agreed apart from climate issue: EU officials,"** by Reuters' Paul Carrel and Noah Barkin in Hamburg: "World leaders meeting for a summit in Germany have agreed every aspect of a joint statement apart from the section on climate where the United States is pushing for a reference to fossil fuels, European Union officials said on Saturday. The officials said aides had worked until 2 a.m. to finalize a communique for the Group of 20, overcoming differences on trade after U.S. officials agreed to language on fighting protectionism. ... [O]ne EU official [said:] 'We have all the fundamentals. We have a G20 communique, not a G19 communique' ...

"The section that needs to be resolved by the leaders relates to the U.S. insistence that there be a reference to fossil fuels, the official said. ... Trump ... congratulated

Merkel for her stewardship of the summit. 'You have been amazing and you have done a fantastic job. Thank you very much chancellor,' he said." <http://reut.rs/2u3cKxs>

SUPPORT ERODING ... TWO SIMILAR STORIES in the **NYT** and **POLITICO**:

JENNIFER STEINHAUER and **ROBERT PEAR** on A1: **"G.O.P. Support of Senate Health Repeal Erodes During Break"**: "With Congress set to return on Monday after a week's recess, Republican lawmakers are increasingly aware that their seven-year promise to dismantle President Barack Obama's largest policy achievement is deeply imperiled. Senator John Hoeven, Republican of North Dakota, signaled this week that he would not vote for the bill as written, following negative remarks from other senators with large poor and rural populations. That was the 10th defection. Three other Republican senators, Bob Corker of Tennessee, Charles E. Grassley of Iowa and John Boozman of Arkansas, have withheld their support, although they have not declared their opposition, and others have largely remained silent.

"Mr. Grassley told voters on Friday that he was unsure if he would vote for the Senate Republican bill in its current form, according to The Des Moines Register. 'I don't even know if we're going to get a bill up,' said Mr. Grassley, an expert on health policy and taxes who has been in Congress for more than 40 years." <http://nyti.ms/2uBzXUr>

-- JEN HABERKORN: "Time away from Washington deepens GOP misgivings about health plan: Corraling 50 votes looks even more daunting in the run-up to August recess": "Buffeted by headwinds, Republicans will return to Washington on July 10 facing even longer odds for piecing together a bill that can win over skeptical moderates and conservatives in the three weeks before the August recess.

"The events seemed to validate McConnell's original plan to speed a vote on a draft plan before lawmakers scattered across the country for their holiday break. Controversial legislation rarely looks more appealing after sitting out in the open for a week -- conventional wisdom proved true this week. But after canceling the plan for a late June vote, the GOP may have no other option but try to wrap up repeal efforts before August." <http://politi.co/2uVk22E>

SPEAKER PAUL RYAN in Madison yesterday, per the Capital Times: "I'm pleased with where we are. We have a very aggressive agenda, and we know that most of these big difficult things take about a year to do, and that's why this will ultimately coalesce around getting these things done in the fall. But we're basically where I was hoping to be." <http://bit.ly/2sAXJhO>

SIREN -- NYT EDITORIAL BOARD: "Yes, the Trump Administration Has Ideas, and Some Are O.K.": "[A]fter digging through June's pronouncements and bullet points, and consulting the White House, its allies and its critics, we found a few promising ideas amid the blather, as well as some old clunkers. Week One: Infrastructure. A great idea, stalled on the runway. Even the hulking coal barges behind Mr. Trump as he made a 'major' infrastructure speech on June 7 couldn't hide that his biggest job-creation promise, a \$1 trillion infrastructure overhaul, has fallen prey to his inattentiveness, a

congressional logjam, Republicans' worries about costs and their aversion to working with Democrats on most anything.

"Week Two: Workforce Development. Mr. Trump wants to expand vocational school, job training and apprenticeship opportunities to fill a deep gap in the manufacturing, health care, technology and construction labor pools. ... Mr. Trump signed an executive order in June directing the labor secretary to channel available money toward programs that provide paying jobs with a training or educational component. It's not a fully formed plan, but it's a solid effort to address a recognized need. Ivanka Trump again promoted her plan for six weeks of paid family leave. Democrats say it's not enough; Republicans recoil at government-funded family leave. She gets credit for pushing Republicans to consider an overdue idea, but it's unclear that she has the commitment and experience to win them over.

"Week Three: Technology. Jared Kushner ... updated tech executives on progress in modernizing the government's technology infrastructure. Once the cameras were off, the chief executives stressed that cybersecurity and system modernization go hand in hand, and have been a priority at least since the Office of Personnel Management data hack during the Obama administration. They established a working group of experts from two dozen companies, which this week began drawing up recommendations for replacing antiquated government computer systems with secure networks. The project has bipartisan support in Congress. (Read: It might actually get funded.)

"Week Four: Energy. Lots of chest pounding by Mr. Trump and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke about 'energy dominance' and the need to extract even more of what America already has in abundance - oil and natural gas - with little attention to further developing carbon-free energy sources like wind and solar. On the plus side, the president promised to 'revive and expand our nuclear energy sector.'" <http://nyti.ms/2sYcgUb>

JOHN PODESTA in WaPo, **"Why is Trump tweeting about me when he should be doing his job?":** "What I do know is this, which is why I'm choosing to respond to Trump's tweet: The Russians stole my emails. When they did that, they committed a crime. They also invaded my privacy, and the privacy of a multitude of friends, family and colleagues with whom I communicated. That, combined with vicious lies spread by the alt-right media such as the so-called Comet Ping Pong conspiracy, exposed them to potential harm, as was evidenced by the shooting at Comet. The crime the Russians committed, as the intelligence community has concluded, was for the purpose of helping Trump get elected president.

"So the responsible thing for a U.S. president to do, in these circumstances, is to have the backbone to stand up against Russian interference in U.S. democracy - not to question, as Trump did on Thursday, the competence of our own intelligence community and to publicly doubt, once again, the conclusion that Russia was behind the hacking." <http://wapo.st/2u0YO71>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "South Syria truce to allay Jordan, Israel fears about Iran,"

by AP's Karin Laub in Amman, Jordan: "A separate truce for southern Syria, brokered by the U.S. and Russia, is meant to help allay growing concerns by neighboring Jordan and Israel about Iranian military ambitions in the area, including fears that Tehran plans to set up a disruptive long-term presence there. Such apprehensions were stoked by recent movements of Shiite Muslim militias - loyal to Iran and fighting alongside Syrian government forces - toward Jordan's border with Syria, and to another strategic area in the southeast, close to where the two countries meet Iraq." <http://bit.ly/2tXcQWu>

--"**Mosul victory imminent as Islamic State lines collapse: Iraqi military,**" by Reuters' Stephen Kalin in Mosul and Maher Chmaytelli in Erbil <http://reut.rs/2tsAM3o>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with President Donald at the G-20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, on July 7. | Evan Vucci/AP Photo

HMM -- "Group Alleges Tom Price Improperly Spent Campaign Funds During Confirmation Fight," by WSJ's Michelle Hackman: "A campaign-finance watchdog group filed a complaint against Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price on Friday, alleging he improperly used his congressional campaign fund to promote his confirmation to join President Donald Trump's cabinet. In its complaint with the [FEC], the Campaign Legal Center cited a \$40,000 payment the former Georgia congressman's campaign committee made on Jan. 26 to America Rising, a GOP consulting firm. Around the same date ... the firm released research and videos promoting the confirmation of Mr. Price and other cabinet nominees in the Senate. Mr. Price was the only cabinet nominee to use campaign funds to pay the firm."

<http://on.wsj.com/2tAWS22>

THE LATEST ON THE TRAVEL BAN -- "Hawaii takes another legal swat at Trump travel ban," by Josh Gerstein: "Lawyers for the state of Hawaii are making yet another bid to rein in President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order, returning to a federal judge who rejected a similar request just one day earlier. Late Friday night [in Hawaii] the state's legal team filed a new motion asking U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson to declare that the policy the Trump administration began implementing last week violates an injunction Watson issued in March. Hawaii's attorneys, led by Attorney General Douglas Chin and private counsel Neal Katyal, also made an alternative request that Watson modify his order to prohibit the federal government from using a restrictive interpretation requiring immigrants to have sufficient family or other ties to the U.S. to win an exemption from the travel ban." <http://politi.co/2uVtIKA>

FIRST FAMILY -- "Trump pledges \$50 million for global women's business effort advocated by daughter Ivanka," by USA Today's Gregory Korte: "President Trump lent his support to a global women's entrepreneurship initiative championed by daughter

Ivanka Trump on Saturday, pledging \$50 million from the United States to jump-start the effort. ... The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, or We-Fi, will provide loans, mentorship and other services to small businesses run by women around the world, and especially in its poorest countries. The World Bank is seeking \$1 billion in pledges."

<https://usat.ly/2sXQX5i>

-- IN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE: Donald Trump rails on President Hillary Clinton for committing \$50 million in government funding to an initiative run by her daughter. "Crony capitalism is now government policy!" he tweets in this alternate universe.

ANNIE KARNI: Carolyn "Maloney pushes Trump to back women's history museum on the Mall: The New York Democrat, whose district includes Trump Tower, is on a mission to sell her idea to the women in the White House."

<http://politi.co/2u3oUpQ>

VALLEY TALK -- "Facebook campus expansion includes offices, retail, grocery store, housing," by the San Jose Mercury News' George Avalos: "Aiming to address long-neglected community needs and to accommodate its burgeoning workforce, Facebook has proposed a vast expansion of its Menlo Park campus. The new campus would include several office buildings, hundreds of homes, retail, a grocery store, and parks and plazas, all part of what the social network giant envisions as a new center for the neighborhood. ... Menlo Park-based Facebook intends to develop 1.75 million square feet of offices, 1,500 units of housing, 125,000 square feet of retail space including a pharmacy, as well as a cultural and visitor center."

<http://bayareane.ws/2sRbfSK>

***** **A message from Postmates:** Operating in over 200 cities across the United States - Postmates is an innovative, on-demand logistics platform, transforming the way goods move around towns by enabling anyone to have anything delivered to their door step within minutes, and driving over \$1B in goods and merchandise across its platform in 2017. <https://postmates.com> *****

FUN CLICK -- "Making the New York Times: Page one from square one," by Alex Q. Arbuckle in Mashable: "In September 1942, Office of War Information photographer Marjory Collins paid a visit to the offices of the New York Times, located at the iconic One Times Square and an annex on 43rd Street. There, she documented each step of the messy, physical process as news coming in over the wires was sorted, edited, rewritten, laid out, and printed, all under an ever-approaching deadline." **45 pix on one page** <http://on.mash.to/2tTgjVWw>

CLICKER -- "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **14 funnies** <http://politi.co/2u3iK9t>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- "Can America's Farms Survive the Threat of Deportations?" by Michael Frank in

The Atlantic - per Longreads' description: "Increasing deportations under Trump not only threaten the well-being of America's undocumented farm workers, they threaten the very system that keeps America's farms running, tax dollars flowing and food prices low. Here's what's happening in New York's rural Hudson Valley." <http://theatlntc/2tqvftV>

-- **"Economics of the populist backlash,"** by Dani Rodrik in VoxEU: "Populism has been on the rise for quite some time, and it is doubtful that it will be going away. ... [T]he populist backlash to globalisation should not have come as a surprise, in light of economic history and economic theory. While the backlash may have been predictable, however, the specific forms it took were less so, and are related to the forms in which globalisation shocks make themselves felt in society." <http://bit.ly/2tz2GZJ>

-- **"Generation Shaq: Catching up with the kids named after a larger-than-life NBA superstar,"** by Alex Prewitt in Sports Illustrated - per Longform's description: "In 1993, his rookie season, more than 1,700 boys were named after Shaquille O'Neal. Now they've grown up." <http://on.si.com/2tqUWec>

-- **"Love Thy Neighbor?"** by WaPo's Stephanie McCrummen: "When a Muslim doctor arrived in a rural Midwestern town, 'it felt right.' But that feeling began to change after the election of Donald Trump." <http://wapo.st/2u0VOHG>

-- **"The Devil's Henchmen,"** by Kenneth R. Rosen in the Atavist: "Iraqi forces have killed thousands of Islamic State fighters. In death, what do they deserve? Seeking answers in the ruined city of Mosul, Kenneth R. Rosen unearths a terrible crime."
<http://bit.ly/2sPwEvJ>

-- **"The Hacker Who Cared Too Much,"** by David Kushner in Rolling Stone: "When a programmer shut down a hospital website to defend a sick girl, he raised a crucial question: What are the bounds of protest in the digital age?" <http://rol.st/2u1pQv5>

-- **"Who will speak for the geese?"** by Peter Moskowitz in The Outline: "New York City has made a habit, and a business, of massacring geese. One Brooklyn man is trying to save them." <http://bit.ly/2sPGRYM>

-- "**Bunkers for the 0.003 percent**" - Garrett Graff, author of "Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government's Secret Plan to Save Itself--While the Rest of Us Die," interviewed by Elisabeth Eaves in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: "You've got 20 people in the line of official succession, but each office has a 20-person line of succession beneath it. You would have this very weird set of surprise leaders. It would include the UN ambassador, the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, the top federal prosecutor in Chicago. You would have all of these people popping up and saying: Hi, we're the new leadership of the United States!" <http://bit.ly/2u10LQV> ... **\$22.47 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2rFq1Yc>

-- "Life after Armageddon: the deep psychological impact of the Second World War," by John Gray in the New Statesman: "The postwar era was energised by an idea

of freedom and a feeling of hope. The generation of leaders that emerged was old enough to remember the Great Depression, and determined that nothing like it would happen again." <http://bit.ly/2tqJxel>

-- **"The Brave New World of Gene Editing,"** by Matthew Cobb in N.Y. Review of Books -- per The Browser's description: "Fearful account of our seemingly inevitable drift from genetic engineering to eugenics. Tests for genetic diseases are commonplace; the cost of sequencing a human genome has plummeted; techniques for gene-editing are proven. We can 'deliberately change the frequency of certain human genes in the population'. Only laws and ethics constrain experimentation. 'With the best of intentions and, for the moment, the best of outcomes, we have drifted across a line in the sand.'" <http://bit.ly/2tqM5ct>

-- **"My body is a cage of my own making,"** by Roxane Gay in The Guardian: "Today, I am a fat woman. I don't think I am ugly. I don't hate myself in the way society would have me hate myself, but I hate how the world all too often responds to this body. It would be easy to pretend I am just fine with my body as it is. I'm a feminist and I know that it is important to resist unreasonable standards for how my body should look. What I know and what I feel are two very different things. Feeling comfortable isn't entirely about beauty standards." <http://bit.ly/2sPKmhO>

-- **"The rise of the McModern,"** by Kate Wagner in Curbed: "The creator of McMansion Hell on a new strain of modern houses for the masses." <http://bit.ly/2tz85Ah>

-- **"When Historic Preservation Depends on Gentrification,"** by Charles F. McElwee III in the American Conservative: "In today's San Francisco, the idea of enjoying a reasonable financial existence is foreign to the descendants of immigrants who flocked to the Bay Area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Google's private buses shuttle tech bros down to Silicon Valley in a city where the unrepentant pace of gentrification and technology are erasing any sense of historical identity. To live a middle-class life in San Francisco is now a form of augmented reality." <http://bit.ly/2sRlmXF>

-- **"Racing the Storm: The Story of the Mobile Bay Sailing Disaster,"** by Matthew Teague in Smithsonian: "When hurricane-force winds suddenly struck the Bay, they swept more than 100 boaters into one of the worst sailing disasters in modern American history." <http://bit.ly/2sWh4JT>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser last night at RPM Italian.

TRANSITIONS -- **Ali-Jae Henke** is now leading Google's Republican elections team as head of industry. She most recently had a stint in the company's L.A. office where she supported the Warner Bros' business. ... Obama NSC alum and former Foreign Service

officer **Ryan Hass**, and Obama NSC and DOD alum **Tarun Chhabra** started this past week as fellows in the Brookings Foreign Policy program. Obama DOD alum **Mara Karlin**, recently appointed to the faculty at Johns Hopkins SAIS, will also be affiliated with Brookings FP. ...

... **Brian Kamoie**, an NSC alum, is now deputy associate administrator for mission support at FEMA. **Adam Killian** has been also named as FEMA's director of intergovernmental affairs and **Jessica Nalepa** as director of congressional affairs.

BIRTHWEEK (was Thursday): NRSC political director Sarah Morgan (hat tip: mother Martha, who was on-time)

BIRTHDAYS: Steve Holland of Reuters ... Kelley Hudak, coalitions director for House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, is 28 (h/ts Lauren French and Ryan Williams) ... Wolfgang Puck is 68 ... Neil Newhouse, partner and co-founder of Public Opinion Strategies ... Jim Miklaszewski ... former Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) is 91 ... Dennis Harbaugh ... Nick Simpson, director of comms. at Managed Funds Association, is 35 ... Amy Sennett ... Dean Garfield, president and CEO of the Information Technology Industry Council ... Eve Samborn McCool, senior digital strategist at Revolution Messaging (h/t father Randall) ... Jamie Baker is 33 ... Stef Feldman ... Laura Zapata of UberEATS comms and an HFA alum (h/t Ian Sams) ... Dan Rosenthal, managing principal at Albright Stonebridge Group ... AEI media relations coordinator Maddie James is 24 (h/t Meg Cahill) ... Andrew Kauders, principal at the Podesta Group ... Adrienne Donato ... Eva Barboni, founder and CEO of Atalanta ... Geoff Garin, Democratic strategist and president of Hart Research (h/ts Jon Haber) ...

... **Erik Huey**, SVP of gov't affairs at Entertainment Software Association ... WSJ higher ed reporter Doug Belkin is 49 ... NYT's Lara Jakes ... Anna Uhls, associate counsel at Uber ... Molly Spaeth, comms lead at Uber in Chicago (h/ts Jill Hazelbaker) ... Dave Beard ... Linda Burger, "a 20 year cancer survivor, a fierce political junkie (CNN, MSNBC and Politico Playbook from early morning til late at night), and ... a well-read progressive who always speaks for social equality," is 75 (hubby tip: Jeff) ... Anna Quindlen is 65 ... former Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) is 75 ... Tina Urbanski ... Susie Landau ... Cramer Williams ... Howard Gutman, former U.S. ambassador to Belgium, is 61 ... Bret Coulson ... Brad Baker ... Sandy Kaiser ... Sydney Allen ... Patrick McCarthy ... Laura Davis ... Evan Kaufman ... Dennis Harbaugh ... Patrick Dillon ... Greg Pellegrino is 52 ... Lee Dugatkin is 55 ... Amichai Stein ... Daniel Mintz ... Jeff Dunetz ... Jeffrey Tambor is 73 ... Anjelica Huston is 66 ... Kevin Bacon is 59 ... Toby Keith is 56 ... Jaden Smith is 19 (h/ts AP)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Dallas:

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin ... Outgoing Office of Government Ethics director Walter Schaub. Panel: Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), Jason Riley and Katrina vanden Heuvel

--**Fox News Sunday**: Reince Priebus ... Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.). Panel: Brit Hume, former Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Md.), Newt Gingrich and Juan Williams

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) ... U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley ... Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) ... former Dallas Police Chief David Brown. Panel: Margaret Brennan, Michael Crowley, David Ignatius and David Nakamura

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Former CIA Director John Brennan ... Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... DNC chair Tom Perez and RNC chair Ronna McDaniel. Panel: Ruth Marcus, Kristen Welker, Rich Lowry and Bob Costa

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley ... Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) ... Ash Carter. Panel: Jen Psaki, Rick Santorum, former Ohio State Sen. Nina Turner and Rep. Scott Taylor (R-Va.) (substitute host: CNN's Dana Bash)

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas) ... Grover Norquist ... Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz) ... Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.). Panel: Mary Kissel and Brad Blakeman

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Kellyanne Conway ... Ed Henry ... Meghan McCain ... Mo Elleithee ... Shana Glenzer

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Michael Shear, Karoun Demirjian, Mary Katharine Ham and Jeff Zeleny

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Panel: Elliott Abrams, Anne Applebaum, Ian Bremmer and Anne-Marie Slaughter ... Sergey Karaganov ... David Rubenstein

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: John Avlon, Lynn Sweet and John Gizzi ... Kirsten Powers and Ben Jacobs ... Columbia Journalism Review editor and publisher Kyle Pope ... Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) ... KNIA/KRLS radio news director Robert Leonard

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: CTIA - The Wireless Association president and CEO Meredith Attwell Baker, questioned by Politico's Margaret Harding McGill ...

"Newsmakers": American Hospital Association president and CEO Richard Pollack, questioned by The Hill's Peter Sullivan and Bloomberg News' Anna Edney ... **"Q&A"**: Author and WYNC "On the Media" co-host and managing editor Brooke Gladstone

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2mGabdq>) Former U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford.

***** **A message from Postmates**: With its fleet of Postmates earning taxable incomes, the capital generated through the mobile application is being reinvested in the economy to do everything from pay down debt, to start a small business, or even enroll in college classes. As On Demand platforms shape the future of work, Postmates

applauds legislation aimed at experimenting with portable benefits models, and calls for new federal and local skill-based investments to account for the impact of automation on the workforce. <https://postmates.com> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com
Sent: Thur 11/16/2017 8:30:52 PM
Subject: Re:

Jahan, I specifically asked about how many regulations he has cancelled or reviewed. Also, about how many regional offices he's visited specifically.

And, again, I'd like to put in a request to interview Mr. Pruitt for the article.

Thanks,

Alex

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... “Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA’s criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime

political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. 'Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,' said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [<mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Morris, Madeline[morris.madeline@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Fri 7/21/2017 9:09:37 PM
Subject: EPA Evening News Highlights 7.21.17
EPA Evening News Highlights 7.21.17.docx

EPA Evening News Highlights 7.21.17

The Daily Caller: Trump Has Repealed Hundreds Of Obama-Era Regulations:

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The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/07/20/trump-has-repealed-hundreds-of-obama-era-regulations/>

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By Michael Bastasch, 7/20/17

While President Donald Trump struggles to push through health care reform, his administration has successfully withdrawn hundreds of Obama-era regulations, according to the latest federal regulatory agenda.

The White House Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) "Unified Agenda" now lists "deregulatory actions" taken by federal agencies. So far, the Trump administration has withdrawn 469 regulations proposed in the Obama administration's final regulatory agenda in 2016.

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Inside EPA

<https://insideepa.com/daily-news/epa-eyes-former-obama-doe-official-run-climate-science-review>

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The Trump EPA is considering hiring Steven Koonin, the former Department of Energy (DOE) science adviser who has raised questions about the precise extent of the human role in climate change, to run the agency's proposed "red-team, blue-team" climate science review, according to a knowledgeable source.

Should the agency follow through, a formal role for Koonin on the issue would not be unexpected, as the former Obama administration official has publicly called for the review and both EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Energy Secretary Rick Perry have cited his call to justify their proposed review.

Koonin, in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal earlier this year, proposed the review as a “concrete step” toward “evidence based policymaking” that could combat “politicization of science.” He also drew a parallel with approaches used by the national security community to “test assumptions” and understand risks and uncertainty.

Koonin could also be under consideration for other roles, too, after Pruitt acknowledged in a recent Reuters interview that during a meeting with Koonin they “focused on some other things.”

Other sources also indicated more generally that Koonin has been under consideration for some kind of a role at the agency.

EPA “would hire him or contract with him to be in charge of the whole [red-team, blue-team] process,” says the knowledgeable source, regarding Koonin's possible climate science role.

Pruitt indicated earlier this month that he is considering launching the “red-team, blue-team” exercise, saying in the Reuters interview that he may seek to televise the event.

While he said the exercise was not intended to target EPA's greenhouse gas endangerment finding, he said there could be a legal basis to challenge the finding, though he would rather Congress address the issue.

The idea of a climate science review is anathema to environmental groups and many climate experts who fear it would be used to exaggerate lingering questions about the extent and timing of human influence on climate change in ways that derail needed concrete steps to combat it.

At the same time, others have suggested that such an exercise, “properly done,” could build public consensus. David Bookbinder, a former Sierra Club lawyer and now counsel at the libertarian Niskanen Center, told Inside EPA recently that his group has no concerns over Pruitt's plan, if the panel is appropriately balanced across scientific perspectives.

“Bring it on,” he said. “We should not be afraid of additional rigorous review. We believe it'll lead to the same conclusion.”

But Bookbinder also warned that he may sue the administration if it does not ensure balanced representation on the panel in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), though he acknowledges that the law is difficult to enforce.

Should the red-team, blue-team exercise “degenerate into some sort of kangaroo court farce, we'd certainly consider” a lawsuit under FACA authority, said Bookbinder, who previously sued the Bush administration under FACA seeking to win documents on then-Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force.

A formal role for Koonin could also provide a talking point for the Trump administration to argue the proposed climate science effort is politically even-handed, in that Koonin served as a science adviser to DOE from 2009-2011 -- during the Obama administration.

Koonin is not a climatologist but a technology expert, and his stint at DOE as science adviser included a role as principle author of DOE's first Quadrennial Technology Review, which laid out a roadmap for future technology research and development activities at the department.

Koonin currently sits on DOE's Secretary of Energy Advisory Board, and is the founding director of the Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/07/21/stories/1060057736>

Supreme Court sets October arguments in WOTUS fight

By Amanda Reilly, 7/21/17

Lawyers will square off in October in front of the Supreme Court in a hot-button case over which court is the correct legal venue to hear challenges to the Obama administration's Clean Water Rule.

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At issue in the case is whether the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals erred last year when it found that it had jurisdiction to hear litigation over the controversial rule.

The Obama administration rule — which is also known as Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS — aimed to clarify which wetlands and streams receive automatic protection under the Clean Water Act.

A wide array of industry and state opponents characterized the rule as regulatory overreach and challenged it in federal courts. Environmentalists, on the other hand, thought it was too weak and filed their own litigation.

In all, parties filed 18 lawsuits in district courts and 22 petitions for review in federal appeals courts seeking to strike down the rule. The National Association of Manufacturers and other rule opponents sought to keep the litigation in local district courts, while the Obama administration argued that challenges should be heard by appellate courts.

In February 2016, the 6th Circuit — which had previously stayed the rule nationwide while litigation was pending — issued a split 2-1 decision asserting jurisdiction (Greenwire, Feb. 22, 2016).

NAM petitioned the Supreme Court to resolve the dispute over jurisdiction, and in January, the high court agreed to hear the case. The court later rejected the Trump administration's request to pause proceedings while U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers reconsider the joint rule (Greenwire, April 3).

States, trade groups, electric utilities and environmentalists have all backed NAM's argument to the high court that challenges belong in district courts.

The core of their legal arguments is that WOTUS is a definitional rule that doesn't fit within the categories that the Clean Water Act says fall under the purview of appellate courts (Greenwire, May 2).

The choice of court affects the resources needed to litigate challenges, sets the statute of limitations for filing lawsuits, and helps determine whether actions can be challenged in subsequent civil or criminal proceedings.

The Trump administration has yet to file its initial brief in the case. The government's response is currently due July 28.

As the court battle over jurisdiction plays out in the Supreme Court, the Trump administration is moving forward on repealing WOTUS. In June, EPA and the Army Corps issued a repeal proposal. According to a White House deregulatory agenda released yesterday, the administration plans to propose a replacement by December.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/widening-russia-probe-prompts-shake-ups-in-trumps-legal-communications-staff/2017/07/21/dea3e18a-6e0a-11e7-8961-ec5f3e1e2a5c_story.html?utm_term=.594b20b06297

Spicer Resigns As White House Press Secretary, Scaramucci To Be Communications Director

By Abby Phillip, Ashley Parker, and Damian Paletta, 7/21/17

White House press secretary Sean Spicer resigned Friday, following the appointment of wealthy financier Anthony Scaramucci as White House communications director.

Spicer's deputy, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, was promoted to the press secretary role several hours later.

Spicer's abrupt and angry departure — which caught even senior West Wing staffers by surprise — reflects the latest upheaval in a White House that has been consumed by chaos and staff infighting since almost the day President Trump took office.

Scaramucci has previously had a tense and fraught relationship with both Spicer and White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, who both vehemently objected to Trump's decision to install Scaramucci in the top communications job. Scaramucci has coined a particularly crude nickname for Priebus, and Priebus previously blocked the financier from several other top White House roles.

Scaramucci had been in talks with the president and senior staff all week. But the shake-up comes amid intensifying tumult at the White House as Trump moves to respond to the widening special counsel probe into his campaign's possible collusion with the Russian government and searches for ways to revive the administration's stalled legislative agenda.

Incoming White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci said July 21 that there wasn't any "friction" between him and former White House press secretary Sean Spicer. (Reuters)

Trump officially offered the position to Scaramucci, who he has become closer to in recent weeks, at a meeting with senior staff in the Oval Office on Friday morning. On Thursday, Trump, Vice President Pence, Scaramucci and Trump's daughter, Ivanka, also huddled privately in the Oval Office to discuss Scaramucci's new role.

"The President wanted to bring on some folks, to add to the team. They were great," Spicer said in a brief interview on Friday. "This is something you dream of. I can't thank the president enough."

Asked if he had any regrets, Spicer — who on Twitter said he would serve in his post through

the end of August — replied: “None.”

In a statement read by Sanders during the daily briefing, Trump said he was “grateful for Sean’s work” and wished him “continued success as he moves on to pursue new opportunities — just look at his great television ratings.”

On Friday morning, the West Wing scrambled to present a united public front. Priebus called a private meeting of the White House communications staff, and made clear that Spicer, who is expected to help Scaramucci transition into the role, is leaving to give the new communications director “a clean slate,” according to someone briefed on the meeting.

Priebus also tried to play down any tensions with Scaramucci, saying the two have known each other for a long time, and Scaramucci told his new team that he is not a “top down” manager, this person said.

Scaramucci and Spicer then hugged.

But bringing Scaramucci into the White House is likely to increase the backbiting and tension among Trump’s senior staff, especially with Priebus, with whom he has clashed in the past. A Priebus ally familiar with the move, however, rejected the notion that the chief of staff had tried to block Scaramucci, saying he was simply trying to slow down the process.

Stephen K. Bannon, Trump’s senior strategist, also opposed the hiring, according to two people familiar with the discussions. Though Bannon — the former chairman of the conservative website Breitbart News — likes Scaramucci personally, he worried that he represents the corporate, Wall Street globalists against which he and other White House hard-liners have railed, and does not have the right skill set for the job.

The communications post has remained open since it was vacated by Michael Dubke in May.

Scaramucci addressed reporters Friday afternoon during the daily briefing where he thanked Spicer for doing an “amazing job” and added, “I love the guy. I hope he goes on to make a tremendous amount of money.”

Scaramucci also insisted he has a good relationship with Priebus and said he offered to bring him on board as chief operating officer at his SkyBridge Capital company following the 2012 presidential campaign, after Republican Mitt Romney lost his White House bid. Priebus, then the head of the Republican National Committee, declined the offer.

“We’re a little bit like brothers,” he said. “We rough each other up a bit, and that’s totally normal for brothers. He’s a dear friend.”

Several times during Friday’s briefing, Scaramucci said he loved the president and that his goal is to make sure Trump’s message is heard by the public and better represented in the media.

“I think there’s been at times a disconnect between the way we see the president and how much we love the president and the way some of you perhaps see the president,” he said. “And I certainly see the American people probably see the president the way I do. But we want to get that message out there.”

Ivanka Trump, her husband Jared Kushner, a senior adviser, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had all been pushing Scaramucci for the job — and on Friday, as some West Wing officials made a last-ditch attempt to convince the president to rethink his decision, both Ivanka and Kushner personally reached out to Scaramucci, to reassure him.

The president has been particularly taken in recent weeks with Scaramucci’s hard-charging and frequent defenses of his administration on cable news — the gold standard for Trump. The president also was impressed with how Scaramucci — known as “The Mooch” — ferociously fought back against a CNN article about himself, ultimately leading to the resignation of three CNN staffers involved with the story.

“The president bringing in Anthony Scaramucci is a tremendous boost to the communications

shop,” said Bryan Lanza, an adviser to Trump’s campaign. “What the president has in Anthony Scaramucci is a highly intelligent communicator who understands the president’s message and that’s what the White House has been lacking since January — someone who understands the pulses and the message of President Trump’s agenda.”

Bringing Scaramucci into the fold represents the most significant shake-up yet for a communications shop that has struggled to amplify the president’s message on the administration’s core economic and national security priorities.

Scaramucci, a Trump campaign loyalist backed by Trump’s children, was slated to join the White House in another capacity earlier this year, but he had challenges resolving ethical conflicts associated with his fund, SkyBridge Capital, which he sold to a Chinese conglomerate with ties to the government just before Trump’s inauguration.

On Friday, Scaramucci told reporters he has been assured by government ethics officials and the White House counsel that there should be no impediments to him joining the administration now.

“My start date is going to be in a couple of weeks, so that it’s a — 100 percent totally cleansed and clean,” he said.

While Trump seeks to overhaul his communications shop, his legal team is also in flux. Trump’s longtime personal attorney, Marc Kasowitz, will step back from his central role in the president’s outside legal team with John M. Dowd, a seasoned Washington attorney with a focus on white-collar crime, now taking the lead in managing the president’s defense. Mark Corallo, a longtime GOP operative who had served as a spokesman for Trump’s legal team, resigned Thursday.

The president has become agitated by the possibility that special counsel Robert Mueller might begin looking into Trump and his family’s personal finances. In an interview this week with the New York Times, the president issued a warning to Mueller that such a move would be a “violation.”

“Let’s go back to what the purpose of the investigation was: Russian interference in our

election,” said White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, speaking on Fox News Friday morning. She added, “Where is this going and are Americans comfortable with that — with the taxpayers funding this, with this going off all types of chutes and ladders?”

Trump’s legal team has begun working to undermine the special counsel probe, including investigating ways to highlight conflicts of interest on Mueller’s, The Washington Post reported on Thursday. The president has also inquired about his pardon authority.

After the story was published, one of Trump’s attorneys, Dowd, said it was “not true” and “nonsense.”

One Trump adviser said the president has simply expressed a curiosity in understanding the reach of his pardoning authority, as well as the limits of Mueller’s investigation.

“This is not in the context of, ‘I can’t wait to pardon myself,’ ” a close adviser said.

The idea that Trump would proactively pardon people involved in the Russia investigation was immediately criticized by the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is also investigating Russian meddling in the election and possible Trump campaign collusion.

“The possibility that the President is considering pardons at this early stage in these ongoing investigations is extremely disturbing,” Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) said in a statement. “Pardoning any individuals who may have been involved would be crossing a fundamental line.”

The White House has struggled to remain focused on its agenda, amid the constant drumbeat of the Russia investigation. The president himself has only fueled the Russia frenzy, giving an interview on Wednesday in which he talked extensively about the probe.

Last week, the White House announced that another attorney, Ty Cobb, would join the White House to help manage the response to the investigation internally.

Spicer's resignation marks a sudden end to his short but rocky tenure. The press secretary undercut his own credibility his first full day on the job when, at Trump's urging, he publicly made false statements about the size of the president's Inauguration Day crowds.

It was a falsehood that set the tone, and one from which he could never quite recover. Trump constantly nitpicked and criticized Spicer's on camera briefings, polling his friends about how long he should retain Spicer in the high-profile role. There were other slights. During his first trip abroad, Trump pointedly kept Spicer, a devout Catholic, from a meeting with the pope.

Spicer, a longtime Republican communications operative in Washington, D.C., began his time at the podium with a warm relationship with the press corps. But just six months later, some reporters say they now mostly associate him with his "Saturday Night Live" caricature — where he was parodied by a woman, much to the president's chagrin — and his red-raced shouting binges.

In private, Scaramucci seemed to have at least entertained the top communications post since June. Speaking at Mitt Romney's private retreat in Deer Valley, Utah last month, Scaramucci said he believed the White House was faltering in part because the communications director post was empty, and that communicating directly with the public was the key imperative of this White House, according to one attendee.

If he were in the role, Scaramucci continued, he'd consider starting a daily administration "television" broadcast at 7 a.m., complete with a desk on the White House lawn and guests that included Democratic leaders.

"I like Anthony, but Pelosi and Schumer aren't going on his state-run morning show," the attendee said, referring to Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), and speaking anonymously to share details of a private discussion.

Spicer, meanwhile, in the brief interview said he hopes he's just "midway through the book" of

his life.

The now former White House press secretary had one final messaging flourish: This most recent chapter, he said, might best be titled, "Exciting Times."

Ben Terris, David Nakamura and Rosalind Helderman contributed to this report.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/white-house-to-tackle-manufacturing-gaps-it-says-weaken-u-s-security-1500667592>

White House to Tackle Manufacturing Gaps It Says Weaken U.S. Security

By Bob Davis, 7/21/17

As Senate Republicans wrestle with their path forward on repealing Obamacare, the GOP's grassroots is increasing pressure on wavering senators to make sure the law is killed.

"Our supporters want repeal of Obamacare," Tea Party Patriots co-founder Jenny Beth Martin told CBS News Chief Political Correspondent Major Garrett and CBS News Political Director Steve Chaggaris on this week's episode of "The Takeout."

And, unlike many lawmakers, tea party supporters seem to be unconcerned about what might replace Obamacare, should the Senate manage to rescind the law. At this point, after Mitch McConnell has so far been unable to come up with 50 Senate votes for a repeal, the tea party is getting nervous about whether the Senate can deliver.

"I want the Senate Republicans at the very least, the very least, to pass the 2015 repeal bill,"

Martin demanded. Repeal the main focus for the supporters of her group.

"They care far more about repeal than they do about replace," Martin said. "They've lost their doctors. Their insurance costs have gone up. The quality of the health care they have has been affected." Ninety-eight percent of her group's supporters want the repeal, Martin said.

Opposition to Obamacare, which Martin said has united the tea party since the law was signed by former President Obama in 2010, continues, even as public support for it has increased.

"They understand that the government control that we saw under President Obama has affected them very personally and very deeply and they want it gone," she said.

If, after seven years of promises, Republicans fail to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the GOP opponents of the bill can expect to lose their conservative supporters.

"They are very angry, they want to see the people who do not vote to repeal Obamacare, they want to see primary challenges to them, they don't want these people in office anymore," Martin said.

CNS News

<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/terence-p-jeffrey/boom-mining-216-q1-construction-56-manufacturing-47-bust-finance-and>

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By Terence Jeffrey, 7/21/17

The real value added to the U.S economy by the mining, construction and manufacturing sectors

boomed in the first quarter of 2017, while the real value added by the financial and insurance sector dropped, according to data released today by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Overall, the U.S. economy grew at an annual pace of only 1.4 percent in the first quarter. But the value added by mining grew by a booming annual rate of 21.6 percent, while construction grew 5.6 percent and manufacturing grew 4.7%.

The BEA says that the value added by an industry—which equals the market value of the goods, services and structures it produces minus the values of the goods and services it consumes in production—is “a measure of an industry’s contribution to GDP.”

“Mining increased by 21.6 percent, after increasing 5.2 percent [in the fourth quarter of last year],” said BEA. “The first quarter growth primarily reflected increases in oil and gas extraction, as well as support activities for mining. This was the largest increase since the fourth quarter of 2014.”

The overall 4.7 percent growth in manufacturing reflected 5.0 percent growth in manufacturing of nondurable goods (i.e. products such as clothing and food) and 4.4 percent growth in the manufacturing of durable goods.

“Durable goods manufacturing increased 4.4 percent, after increasing 0.7 percent,” said BEA. “The first quarter growth primarily reflected increases in motor vehicles, bodies and trailers, and parts manufacturing, as well as machinery manufacturing.”

At the same time that mining, construction and manufacturing were booming, the finance and insurance sector declined by 2.1 percent.

Among other industries that declined during the quarter, according to the BEA data, were agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (-39.8%); utilities (-6.4%); retail trade (-3.6%); and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (-0.9%).

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The Trump EPA is considering hiring Steven Koonin, the former Department of Energy (DOE) science adviser who has raised questions about the precise extent of the human role in climate change, to run the agency's proposed “red-team, blue-team” climate science review, according to a knowledgeable source.

Should the agency follow through, a formal role for Koonin on the issue would not be unexpected, as the former Obama administration official has publicly called for the review and both EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Energy Secretary Rick Perry have cited his call to justify their proposed review.

Koonin, in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal earlier this year, proposed the review as a “concrete step” toward “evidence based policymaking” that could combat “politicization of science.” He also drew a parallel with approaches used by the national security community to “test assumptions” and understand risks and uncertainty.

Koonin could also be under consideration for other roles, too, after Pruitt acknowledged in a recent Reuters interview that during a meeting with Koonin they “focused on some other things.”

Other sources also indicated more generally that Koonin has been under consideration for some kind of a role at the agency.

EPA “would hire him or contract with him to be in charge of the whole [red-team, blue-team] process,” says the knowledgeable source, regarding Koonin's possible climate science role.

Pruitt indicated earlier this month that he is considering launching the “red-team, blue-team” exercise, saying in the Reuters interview that he may seek to televise the event.

While he said the exercise was not intended to target EPA's greenhouse gas endangerment finding, he said there could be a legal basis to challenge the finding, though he would rather Congress address the issue.

The idea of a climate science review is anathema to environmental groups and many climate experts who fear it would be used to exaggerate lingering questions about the extent and timing of human influence on climate change in ways that derail needed concrete steps to combat it.

At the same time, others have suggested that such an exercise, “properly done,” could build public consensus. David Bookbinder, a former Sierra Club lawyer and now counsel at the libertarian Niskanen Center, told Inside EPA recently that his group has no concerns over Pruitt's plan, if the panel is appropriately balanced across scientific perspectives.

"Bring it on," he said. "We should not be afraid of additional rigorous review. We believe it'll lead to the same conclusion."

But Bookbinder also warned that he may sue the administration if it does not ensure balanced representation on the panel in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), though he acknowledges that the law is difficult to enforce.

Should the red-team, blue-team exercise "degenerate into some sort of kangaroo court farce, we'd certainly consider" a lawsuit under FACA authority, said Bookbinder, who previously sued the Bush administration under FACA seeking to win documents on then-Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force.

A formal role for Koonin could also provide a talking point for the Trump administration to argue the proposed climate science effort is politically even-handed, in that Koonin served as a science adviser to DOE from 2009-2011 -- during the Obama administration.

Koonin is not a climatologist but a technology expert, and his stint at DOE as science adviser included a role as principle author of DOE's first Quadrennial Technology Review, which laid out a roadmap for future technology research and development activities at the department.

Koonin currently sits on DOE's Secretary of Energy Advisory Board, and is the founding director of the Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/07/21/stories/1060057736>

Supreme Court sets October arguments in WOTUS fight

By Amanda Reilly, 7/21/17

Lawyers will square off in October in front of the Supreme Court in a hot-button case over which court is the correct legal venue to hear challenges to the Obama administration's Clean Water Rule.

The high court this week set oral arguments in the case for the morning of Oct. 11.

At issue in the case is whether the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals erred last year when it found that it had jurisdiction to hear litigation over the controversial rule.

The Obama administration rule — which is also known as Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS — aimed to clarify which wetlands and streams receive automatic protection under the Clean Water Act.

A wide array of industry and state opponents characterized the rule as regulatory overreach and challenged it in federal courts. Environmentalists, on the other hand, thought it was too weak and filed their own litigation.

In all, parties filed 18 lawsuits in district courts and 22 petitions for review in federal appeals courts seeking to strike down the rule. The National Association of Manufacturers and other rule opponents sought to keep the litigation in local district courts, while the Obama administration argued that challenges should be heard by appellate courts.

In February 2016, the 6th Circuit — which had previously stayed the rule nationwide while litigation was pending — issued a split 2-1 decision asserting jurisdiction (Greenwire, Feb. 22, 2016).

NAM petitioned the Supreme Court to resolve the dispute over jurisdiction, and in January, the high court agreed to hear the case. The court later rejected the Trump administration's request to pause proceedings while U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers reconsider the joint rule (Greenwire, April 3).

States, trade groups, electric utilities and environmentalists have all backed NAM's argument to the high court that challenges belong in district courts.

The core of their legal arguments is that WOTUS is a definitional rule that doesn't fit within the categories that the Clean Water Act says fall under the purview of appellate courts (Greenwire, May 2).

The choice of court affects the resources needed to litigate challenges, sets the statute of limitations for filing lawsuits, and helps determine whether actions can be challenged in subsequent civil or criminal proceedings.

The Trump administration has yet to file its initial brief in the case. The government's response is currently due July 28.

As the court battle over jurisdiction plays out in the Supreme Court, the Trump administration is moving forward on repealing WOTUS. In June, EPA and the Army Corps issued a repeal proposal. According to a White House deregulatory agenda released yesterday, the administration plans to propose a replacement by December.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/widening-russia-probe-prompts-shake-ups-in-trumps-legal-communications-staff/2017/07/21/dea3e18a-6e0a-11e7-8961-ec5f3e1e2a5c_story.html?utm_term=.594b20b06297

Spicer Resigns As White House Press Secretary, Scaramucci To Be Communications Director

By Abby Phillip, Ashley Parker, and Damian Paletta, 7/21/17

White House press secretary Sean Spicer resigned Friday, following the appointment of wealthy financier Anthony Scaramucci as White House communications director.

Spicer's deputy, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, was promoted to the press secretary role several hours later.

Spicer's abrupt and angry departure — which caught even senior West Wing staffers by surprise — reflects the latest upheaval in a White House that has been consumed by chaos and staff infighting since almost the day President Trump took office.

Scaramucci has previously had a tense and fraught relationship with both Spicer and White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, who both vehemently objected to Trump's decision to install Scaramucci in the top communications job. Scaramucci has coined a particularly crude nickname for Priebus, and Priebus previously blocked the financier from several other top White House roles.

Scaramucci had been in talks with the president and senior staff all week. But the shake-up comes amid intensifying tumult at the White House as Trump moves to respond to the widening special counsel probe into his campaign's possible collusion with the Russian government and searches for ways to revive the administration's stalled legislative agenda.

Incoming White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci said July 21 that there wasn't any "friction" between him and former White House press secretary Sean Spicer. (Reuters)
Trump officially offered the position to Scaramucci, who he has become closer to in recent weeks, at a meeting with senior staff in the Oval Office on Friday morning. On Thursday, Trump, Vice President Pence, Scaramucci and Trump's daughter, Ivanka, also huddled privately in the Oval Office to discuss Scaramucci's new role.

"The President wanted to bring on some folks, to add to the team. They were great," Spicer said in a brief interview on Friday. "This is something you dream of. I can't thank the president enough."

Asked if he had any regrets, Spicer — who on Twitter said he would serve in his post through the end of August — replied: "None."

In a statement read by Sanders during the daily briefing, Trump said he was "grateful for Sean's work" and wished him "continued success as he moves on to pursue new opportunities — just look at his great television ratings."

On Friday morning, the West Wing scrambled to present a united public front. Priebus called a private meeting of the White House communications staff, and made clear that Spicer, who is expected to help Scaramucci transition into the role, is leaving to give the new communications director "a clean slate," according to someone briefed on the meeting.

Priebus also tried to play down any tensions with Scaramucci, saying the two have known each other for a long time, and Scaramucci told his new team that he is not a "top down" manager, this person said.

Scaramucci and Spicer then hugged.

But bringing Scaramucci into the White House is likely to increase the backbiting and tension among Trump's senior staff, especially with Priebus, with whom he has clashed in the past. A Priebus ally familiar with the move, however, rejected the notion that the chief of staff had tried to block Scaramucci, saying he was simply trying to slow down the process.

Stephen K. Bannon, Trump's senior strategist, also opposed the hiring, according to two people familiar with the discussions. Though Bannon — the former chairman of the conservative website Breitbart News — likes Scaramucci personally, he worried that he represents the corporate, Wall Street globalists against which he and other White House hard-liners have railed, and does not have the right skill set for the job.

The communications post has remained open since it was vacated by Michael Dubke in May.

Scaramucci addressed reporters Friday afternoon during the daily briefing where he thanked Spicer for doing an "amazing job" and added, "I love the guy. I hope he goes on to make a tremendous amount of money."

Scaramucci also insisted he has a good relationship with Priebus and said he offered to bring him on board as chief operating officer at his SkyBridge Capital company following the 2012 presidential campaign, after Republican Mitt Romney lost his White House bid. Priebus, then the head of the Republican National Committee, declined the offer.

"We're a little bit like brothers," he said. "We rough each other up a bit, and that's totally normal for brothers. He's a dear friend."

Several times during Friday's briefing, Scaramucci said he loved the president and that his goal is to make sure Trump's message is heard by the public and better represented in the media.

"I think there's been at times a disconnect between the way we see the president and how much we love the president and the way some of you perhaps see the president," he said. "And I certainly see the American people probably see the president the way I do. But we want to get that message out there."

Ivanka Trump, her husband Jared Kushner, a senior adviser, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had all been pushing Scaramucci for the job — and on Friday, as some West Wing officials made a last-ditch attempt to convince the president to rethink his decision, both Ivanka and Kushner personally reached out to Scaramucci, to reassure him.

The president has been particularly taken in recent weeks with Scaramucci's hard-charging and frequent defenses of his administration on cable news — the gold standard for Trump. The president also was impressed with how Scaramucci — known as "The Mooch" — ferociously fought back against a CNN article about himself, ultimately leading to the resignation of three CNN staffers involved with the story.

"The president bringing in Anthony Scaramucci is a tremendous boost to the communications shop," said Bryan Lanza, an adviser to Trump's campaign. "What the president has in Anthony Scaramucci is a highly intelligent communicator who understands the president's message and that's what the White House has been lacking since January — someone who understands the pulses and the message of President Trump's agenda."

Bringing Scaramucci into the fold represents the most significant shake-up yet for a communications shop that has struggled to amplify the president's message on the administration's core economic and national security priorities.

Scaramucci, a Trump campaign loyalist backed by Trump's children, was slated to join the White House in another capacity earlier this year, but he had challenges resolving ethical conflicts associated with his fund, SkyBridge Capital, which he sold to a Chinese conglomerate with ties to the government just before Trump's inauguration.

On Friday, Scaramucci told reporters he has been assured by government ethics officials and the White House counsel that there should be no impediments to him joining the administration now.

"My start date is going to be in a couple of weeks, so that it's a — 100 percent totally cleansed and clean," he said.

While Trump seeks to overhaul his communications shop, his legal team is also in flux. Trump's longtime

personal attorney, Marc Kasowitz, will step back from his central role in the president's outside legal team with John M. Dowd, a seasoned Washington attorney with a focus on white-collar crime, now taking the lead in managing the president's defense. Mark Corallo, a longtime GOP operative who had served as a spokesman for Trump's legal team, resigned Thursday.

The president has become agitated by the possibility that special counsel Robert Mueller might begin looking into Trump and his family's personal finances. In an interview this week with the New York Times, the president issued a warning to Mueller that such a move would be a "violation."

"Let's go back to what the purpose of the investigation was: Russian interference in our election," said White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, speaking on Fox News Friday morning. She added, "Where is this going and are Americans comfortable with that — with the taxpayers funding this, with this going off all types of chutes and ladders?"

Trump's legal team has begun working to undermine the special counsel probe, including investigating ways to highlight conflicts of interest on Mueller's, The Washington Post reported on Thursday. The president has also inquired about his pardon authority.

After the story was published, one of Trump's attorneys, Dowd, said it was "not true" and "nonsense."

One Trump adviser said the president has simply expressed a curiosity in understanding the reach of his pardoning authority, as well as the limits of Mueller's investigation.

"This is not in the context of, 'I can't wait to pardon myself,' " a close adviser said.

The idea that Trump would proactively pardon people involved in the Russia investigation was immediately criticized by the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is also investigating Russian meddling in the election and possible Trump campaign collusion.

"The possibility that the President is considering pardons at this early stage in these ongoing investigations is extremely disturbing," Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) said in a statement. "Pardoning any individuals who may have been involved would be crossing a fundamental line."

The White House has struggled to remain focused on its agenda, amid the constant drumbeat of the Russia investigation. The president himself has only fueled the Russia frenzy, giving an interview on Wednesday in which he talked extensively about the probe.

Last week, the White House announced that another attorney, Ty Cobb, would join the White House to help manage the response to the investigation internally.

Spicer's resignation marks a sudden end to his short but rocky tenure. The press secretary undercut his own credibility his first full day on the job when, at Trump's urging, he publicly made false statements about the size of the president's Inauguration Day crowds.

It was a falsehood that set the tone, and one from which he could never quite recover. Trump constantly nitpicked and criticized Spicer's on camera briefings, polling his friends about how long he should retain Spicer in the high-profile role. There were other slights. During his first trip abroad, Trump pointedly kept Spicer, a devout Catholic, from a meeting with the pope.

Spicer, a longtime Republican communications operative in Washington, D.C., began his time at the podium with a warm relationship with the press corps. But just six months later, some reporters say they now mostly associate him with his "Saturday Night Live" caricature — where he was parodied by a woman, much to the president's chagrin — and his red-faced shouting binges.

In private, Scaramucci seemed to have at least entertained the top communications post since June. Speaking at Mitt Romney's private retreat in Deer Valley, Utah last month, Scaramucci said he believed the White House was faltering in part because the communications director post was empty, and that communicating directly with the public was the key imperative of this White House, according to one attendee.

If he were in the role, Scaramucci continued, he'd consider starting a daily administration "television" broadcast at 7 a.m., complete with a desk on the White House lawn and guests that included Democratic leaders.

"I like Anthony, but Pelosi and Schumer aren't going on his state-run morning show," the attendee said, referring to Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), and speaking anonymously to share details of a private discussion.

Spicer, meanwhile, in the brief interview said he hopes he's just "midway through the book" of his life.

The now former White House press secretary had one final messaging flourish: This most recent chapter, he said, might best be titled, "Exciting Times."

Ben Terris, David Nakamura and Rosalind Helderman contributed to this report.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/white-house-to-tackle-manufacturing-gaps-it-says-weaken-u-s-security-1500667592>

White House to Tackle Manufacturing Gaps It Says Weaken U.S. Security

By Bob Davis, 7/21/17

As Senate Republicans wrestle with their path forward on repealing Obamacare, the GOP's grassroots is increasing pressure on wavering senators to make sure the law is killed.

"Our supporters want repeal of Obamacare," Tea Party Patriots co-founder Jenny Beth Martin told CBS News Chief Political Correspondent Major Garrett and CBS News Political Director Steve Chaggaris on this week's episode of "The Takeout."

And, unlike many lawmakers, tea party supporters seem to be unconcerned about what might replace Obamacare, should the Senate manage to rescind the law. At this point, after Mitch McConnell has so far been unable to come up with 50 Senate votes for a repeal, the tea party is getting nervous about whether the Senate can deliver.

"I want the Senate Republicans at the very least, the very least, to pass the 2015 repeal bill," Martin demanded. Repeal the main focus for the supporters of her group.

"They care far more about repeal than they do about replace," Martin said. "They've lost their doctors. Their insurance costs have gone up. The quality of the health care they have has been affected." Ninety-eight percent of her group's supporters want the repeal, Martin said.

Opposition to Obamacare, which Martin said has united the tea party since the law was signed by former President Obama in 2010, continues, even as public support for it has increased.

"They understand that the government control that we saw under President Obama has affected them very personally and very deeply and they want it gone," she said.

If, after seven years of promises, Republicans fail to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the GOP opponents of the bill can expect to lose their conservative supporters.

"They are very angry, they want to see the people who do not vote to repeal Obamacare, they want to see primary challenges to them, they don't want these people in office anymore," Martin said.

CNS News

<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/terence-p-jeffrey/boom-mining-216-q1-construction-56-manufacturing-47-bust-finance-and>

Boom: Mining +21.6% in Q1; Construction +5.6%; Manufacturing +4.7%; Bust: Finance and Insurance - 2.1%

By Terence Jeffrey, 7/21/17

The real value added to the U.S economy by the mining, construction and manufacturing sectors boomed in the first quarter of 2017, while the real value added by the financial and insurance sector dropped, according to data released today by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Overall, the U.S. economy grew at an annual pace of only 1.4 percent in the first quarter. But the value added by mining grew by a booming annual rate of 21.6 percent, while construction grew 5.6 percent and manufacturing grew 4.7%.

The BEA says that the value added by an industry—which equals the market value of the goods, services and structures it produces minus the values of the goods and services it consumes in production—is “a measure of an industry’s contribution to GDP.”

“Mining increased by 21.6 percent, after increasing 5.2 percent [in the fourth quarter of last year],” said BEA. “The first quarter growth primarily reflected increases in oil and gas extraction, as well as support activities for mining. This was the largest increase since the fourth quarter of 2014.”

The overall 4.7 percent growth in manufacturing reflected 5.0 percent growth in manufacturing of nondurable goods (i.e. products such as clothing and food) and 4.4 percent growth in the manufacturing of durable goods.

“Durable goods manufacturing increased 4.4 percent, after increasing 0.7 percent,” said BEA. “The first quarter growth primarily reflected increases in motor vehicles, bodies and trailers, and parts manufacturing, as well as machinery manufacturing.”

At the same time that mining, construction and manufacturing were booming, the finance and insurance sector declined by 2.1 percent.

Among other industries that declined during the quarter, according to the BEA data, were agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (-39.8%); utilities (-6.4%); retail trade (-3.6%); and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (-0.9%).

To: AO OPA Individual News Clips[AO_OPA_Ind_News_Clips@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Tue 3/20/2018 6:13:47 PM
Subject: E&E Greenwire: Pruitt aide didn't have to sign Trump ethics pledge, 3/20/18

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076851/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt aide didn't have to sign Trump ethics pledge

By Kevin Bogardus and Amanda Reilly, 3/20/18

One of U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top aides wasn't required to sign President Trump's ethics pledge.

Byron Brown, deputy chief of staff for policy, was hired in an "administratively determined" position — a unique hiring authority held by the agency under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Consequently, Brown was not designated as a political appointee and didn't have to abide by the pledge.

"Because I am in an Administratively Determined position, I have been advised by [Office of General Counsel]/Ethics that I am not considered an appointee for the purposes of Executive Order 13770 and therefore not required to sign the Trump Ethics Pledge," Brown said in his recusal statement, obtained by E&E News under the Freedom of Information Act.

Brown did note that as an executive branch employee, he was subject to federal impartiality standards and that he had a "covered relationship" with his spouse's employer, Hess Corp. According to his statement, dated last Sept. 26, Brown has recused himself from matters that would have an impact on Hess — even issues of "general applicability" that are focused on oil and gas exploration and production as well as oil and gas processing and transportation.

Brown's recusal lasts until his spouse is no longer employed by Hess. But he is not recused from "broad policy deliberations" related to "diverse interests," such as EPA's risk management plan rulemaking, which was specifically cited by the EPA official.

The Obama-era regulation would require chemical plants to draft plans to prepare for potential disasters. It was originally scheduled to be implemented in March 2017, but Trump's EPA has since delayed the rule for nearly two more years, a decision that is being challenged in court.

Brown is one of several former aides to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) to join EPA under Pruitt. Last year, he was picked to serve on the agency's regulatory reform task force, which was tasked with identifying rules for repeal or modification.

EPA press officials didn't respond to a request for comment from E&E News, including to a question on whether Brown planned to sign the Trump ethics pledge.

Other senior officials have avoided signing the president's ethics pledge.

Nancy Beck, deputy assistant administrator in EPA's chemicals office, was also brought on in an administratively determined slot and didn't sign the pledge. That attracted scrutiny due to her prior job before joining the agency as a top executive with the American Chemistry Council (Greenwire, Aug. 8, 2017).

EPA can hire up to 30 employees in administratively determined positions under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The specific provision for that hiring authority was added in the law's 1977 amendments. It allows the administrator to bring on new staff "without regard to the civil service laws."

Last year, Democrats on Capitol Hill took notice of the agency's use of the hiring authority and called for probes to see whether it was used to avoid ethics rules. That led to both the EPA inspector general and the Government Accountability Office committing to investigate the matter (Greenwire, Jan. 9).

Jennifer Kaplan, an EPA IG spokeswoman, confirmed to E&E News that the watchdog office's audit of EPA's use of administratively determined positions is still ongoing. Meanwhile, GAO

spokesman Chuck Young said the agency's probe is "on hold" because the EPA IG audit is underway and GAO doesn't want to overlap with that investigation.

"We don't want to duplicate efforts," Young said. "We will make a determination on whether there are still questions for GAO to examine once the IG work is completed."

Lobbyists pledge not to lobby

Like Beck, other top EPA officials have grabbed attention for industry ties. Democratic senators questioned the hire of Tate Bennett at the agency last year due to her previous lobbying work for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, a powerful utility trade group (Greenwire, May 16, 2017).

Bennett, who leads EPA's public engagement office, said in a recusal statement dated last November that she is prohibited from participating in "any particular matter" involving NRECA. Her recusal lasts until March 19 next year — two years after she joined government service.

She also noted that she "personally lobbied" on matters that might arise at EPA, but only in her "final months" on the job with the utility trade group — specifically the Clean Power Plan, ozone standards and coal combustion residual issues. Bennett said she wouldn't participate in discussions about those issues, although she can be involved in "logistical matters," such as setting up meetings. She will seek guidance from ethics officials if she is asked to participate "in a more substantive role" in those issues.

Other records obtained under FOIA show that Bennett has signed Trump's ethics pledge, as well. So did Pruitt, just a few days after he was confirmed as EPA administrator by the Senate in February 2017.

Like Bennett, other top EPA officials have pledged to stay away from their prior employers.

Troy Lyons, who leads EPA's congressional and intergovernmental relations office, was a Hess lobbyist before coming to the agency. Before he worked at Hess, he had lobbied for BP PLC.

In his recusal statement, Lyons said he was banned from being involved in matters with Hess and BP. His recusal will expire in April 2019.

He noted that during the previous two years, he had lobbied Congress on the renewable fuel standard, crude oil exports, offshore air emissions and methane emissions — issues that are before EPA. Yet as head of congressional affairs, Lyons said, he wouldn't be involved in the "strategy, development or implementation" of those matters, although he would consult with ethics officials if he did become more involved.

Henry Darwin, assistant deputy administrator at EPA, said in his recusal statement that he would abide by an "one-year cooling off period" with his former employer, the state of Arizona. His recusal lasts until July 4 this year and doesn't extend to matters of "general applicability," like rulemaking.

Darwin joined EPA last year as its chief of operations after serving as a top aide to Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R). He also has been director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

Darwin also said in his statement that he was recusing himself from "any award, promotion, or any other personnel or administrative matter" that involves his wife, Veronica, who works at EPA, as well.

Veronica Darwin, a senior adviser in EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, also has an one-year cooling off period with the state of Arizona, her previous employer, which ends this June, according to her recusal statement.

Richard Yamada, a deputy assistant administrator in EPA's Office of Research and Development, has owned stock in companies like ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil Corp. and Statoil ASA, all valued in the range of \$1,001 to \$15,000, according to his financial disclosure report, dated last October.

But Yamada has a sizable investment in Berkshire Hathaway Inc., the sprawling conglomerate whose holdings include PacifiCorp, the Oregon-based electricity producer, and several other utility and energy companies.

Because of that "current level of [Yamada's] financial ownership" in the company — reported in the range of \$100,001 to \$250,000 — Yamada said he is recused from any matter that will have a direct effect on Berkshire Hathaway, "including any particular matter of general applicability that is focused on sectors in which" the company and its subsidiaries operate. Those encompass pipelines, renewable fuels, alternative fuels, natural gas and electricity, Yamada wrote.

While EPA ethics officials don't expect that his work with the research office will likely "have a direct and predictable financial effect" on Berkshire Hathaway, Yamada said he would first consult with them "prior to participation" if any such situation should arise.

Other senior political appointees have pledged to stay away from certain issues. Dave Ross, head of EPA's water office, has recused himself from participating in the agency's deliberations regarding the Pebble mine project in Bristol Bay, Alaska (see related story).

Legal team's recusals

Several members of the Trump administration's legal team at EPA have ties to companies and entities that have been closely involved in environmental policy or battled with the agency during the Obama administration. Because of those ties, Trump officials have been recused from a number of matters in front of the agency, according to documents obtained through FOIA.

Matt Leopold, the top lawyer at the agency, has several potential conflicts due to his past work for the state of Florida.

Leopold served as general counsel to the state Department of Environmental Protection until March 2015. Leopold continued to provide legal services to the state until June 30, 2017. He was sworn in as general counsel at EPA on Jan. 8.

In a Jan. 10 impartiality determination, principal deputy general counsel Kevin Minoli granted Leopold permission to participate as general counsel in matters that involve Florida, though he wrote that Leopold is required to recuse himself from any matters in which he participated "personally and substantially" as a lawyer for the state. In a Feb. 1 recusal statement, Leopold wrote that he would not participate in any matters involving Okaloosa County, Fla.

In his statement, Leopold noted that several former industry clients, including AT&T Inc., BASF Corp., Ford Motor Co., Siemens Corp., and the Republican National Committee may have environmental interests that conflict with his work at EPA. He is barred from working on matters involving those entities until Jan. 7, 2020.

Leopold also recused himself from litigation brought by the federal government against the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection regarding phosphorus pollution at Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and Everglades National Park. Leopold also wrote that he would not participate in BASF's challenge to pollution loads for northern Florida's Ochlockonee Basin.

Erik Baptist, EPA's senior deputy general counsel, was a senior counsel and a lobbyist for the American Petroleum Institute prior to joining the agency. He was registered to lobby for four years up until 2016, and his portfolio included working on legislation dealing with the renewable fuel standard program.

Last year, Baptist received a limited waiver from Trump's ethics pledge to participate in discussions involving the RFS.

In an October memo, Baptist recused himself from other issues in which API is a party and said he would not participate in litigation that the oil and gas group filed or was involved in against EPA during the Obama administration. The recusal statement expires June 18, 2019.

The long list of cases from which Baptist is recused includes challenges to the 2015 ozone standard and Obama-era methane limits for the oil and gas industry. Baptist also said he would not participate in the ongoing litigation filed by opponents of the Trump administration over

Pruitt's decision to delay safety and emergency response rules for chemical plants.

Baptist also agreed to not participate in matters involving the George Washington University Law School alumni association, Alphabet Inc. or U.S. Bancorp.

Deputy general counsels at EPA have also recused themselves from matters in front of the agency.

David Fotouhi, who joined EPA in March 2017, wrote that he would not participate in matters involving several clients he represented while an attorney at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, including the Association of American Railroads, Carnival Corp., Daimler AG, General Electric Co., Lockheed Martin Corp., Tesoro Corp. (now known as Andeavor) and Trout Unlimited. The recusal period ends March 26, 2019.

Justin Schwab, who was part of the Trump administration's "beachhead" team before joining EPA permanently, pledged to not take part in matters involving law firm Baker and Hostetler LLP, his former employer. His list of former clients includes the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, Caterpillar Inc., Chevron Corp., Southern Co. and Valero Renewable Fuels Co. LLC.

Schwab also said he wouldn't participate in legal issues where the state of Oklahoma or the Virginia House of Delegates is a party. Those recusal periods have already ended — Sept. 23 last year for Oklahoma and Aug. 31 for Virginia (E&E News PM, March 1).

Other top officials' past legal work has led them to recuse themselves from issues before EPA.

Sarah Greenwalt, the agency's senior adviser for water and cross-cutting initiatives, came to EPA after serving as general counsel at the Oklahoma attorney general's office during Pruitt's tenure there.

In November 2017, Greenwalt submitted a recusal statement stating she would not participate in any cases in which Oklahoma is a party, petitioner or intervenor. The 15 listed cases included challenges to the Obama administration's Clean Water Rule, its Clean Power Plan and various air rules, including methane standards and a rule setting requirements for industrial facilities during periods of startup and shutdown.

Greenwalt also said she would not participate in the litigation against Volkswagen AG over the German automaker's diesel emissions cheating scandal.

The recusal period lasted until March 2. Greenwalt was not barred from working on cases in which Oklahoma participated only as an amicus and not directly as a party.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sun 9/10/2017 3:38:52 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise: IRMA makes landfall in Florida -- THE LIMITS of being a TRUMPOCRAT -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: TRUMP's week ahead -- IVANKA and JARED dine with NICK AYERS -- NICK MERRILL and VAL GALASSO's big night

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

[Visit the online home of Playbook](#)

Driving the Day

IRMA'S WRATH -- FROM THE MIAMI HERALD's live updates -- **10:05 a.m.:** "Tropical storm-force winds and extreme gusts are pummeling Coral Gables, bending trees to unnatural, deformed angles or pushing them to the ground. The city's trademark canopy is being shredded, creating impassable streets covered with branches or blocked by downed trees." ... **9:45 a.m.:** "Shortly after Category 4 Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys Sunday morning, 1,378,773 Florida Power & Light customers were without power." ...

... **9:35 a.m.:** "Miami-Dade police halted responding to calls Sunday morning after Hurricane Irma brought hurricane-strength winds to the county." ... **9:30 a.m.:** "The center of fierce Hurricane Irma, pushing a dangerous flood of ocean water, made landfall early Sunday morning on Cudjoe Key, just a short drive down the Overseas Highway from Key West." ... **8:30 a.m.:** "Storm waters are surging in Key West as Hurricane Irma's powerful eyewall moves into the Lower Keys. Storm surge could rise as high as 10 feet, which authorities describe as life-threatening."

<http://hrlid.us/2xTKEm8>

-- **Mike Theiss**, National Geographic photographer, ([@MikeTheiss](https://twitter.com/MikeTheiss)): "Eyewall and Storm Surge !! #HurricaneIrma #KeyWest". **Video** <http://bit.ly/2eXKtIL>

-- **@CNN**: "This is what Miami Beach looked like Saturday night as the strong outer bands from Hurricane Irma moved onshore". **28-second video** <http://bit.ly/2wifXWE>

--**AP at 10:12 a.m.:** "ATLANTA (AP) - First-ever tropical storm warning issued for Atlanta as Hurricane Irma hits Florida on its way toward Georgia."

SPOTTED: Ivanka and Jared at dinner last night with Nick Ayers at Siren, the new restaurant in the Darcy Hotel on Rhode Island Avenue.

TRUMP'S WEEK -- A FEW HIGHLIGHTS from the White House. **MONDAY:** The president and first lady observe a moment of silence for 9/11 Monday, and go to a ceremony at the Pentagon. VP Mike Pence is going to Shanksville, Pennsylvania. **TUESDAY:** Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak visits the White House. **WEDNESDAY:** Trump is meeting with Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.).

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE at 10:11 a.m.: "POTUS spoke to governors of Alabama, Georgia, [South] Carolina and Tennessee this morning. He's spoken numerous times to [Florida] Governor [Rick] Scott and Senator [Marco] Rubio of Florida over the last week as has [Chief of Staff] Gen. [John] Kelly. The Chief of Staff also spoke to Senator [Bill] Nelson of Florida this morning. The President and Vice President are also receiving a briefing this morning."

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS are closely monitoring the delays and cancellations at Delta's hub, Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport, as they decide whether they can hold votes tomorrow. Many lawmakers from Florida are going to have a tough time getting to D.C.

Good Sunday morning. THE LIMITS OF BEING A TRUMPOCRAT ... Let's try not to divine whether **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** will continue to work with Democrats at the expense of Republicans. Nobody knows the answer to that. Let's also take a deep breathe and recognize that Trump didn't cut some transformative deal for the history books. He extended the debt limit and government funding by three months and agreed to billions to aid hurricane victims. Barack Obama worked with Republicans to slash government spending. Trump didn't do anything like that. What Trump did do last week, whether he knows it or not, is create a governing coalition of 150 Republicans and all Democrats. This won't work everywhere. Let's explore where insiders think they have a shot, and where they don't:

-- INFRASTRUCTURE: The White House has said nothing about what it would like to do when it comes to a massive infrastructure bill. But Trump has said he wants to spend lots of money. A chunk of Republicans -- the Freedom Caucus and other fiscal conservatives -- won't be interested in a bunch of unpaid-for deficit spending. But there are moderates in the Senate and House GOP who, presented with the right package, could see benefits in a large-scale public works project. Republican lawmakers from upstate New York, the Midwest and even the outer edges of big cities would also likely be on board. The country's crumbling infrastructure has long been an issue that Democrats have tried to take on. Crafted the right way, not only moderate Democrats, but others could also support an infrastructure package. This could be an area where Trump finds natural allies in both parties.

-- HEALTH CARE: It's difficult to truly understand what Trump wants to do when it comes to health care, since he has been on many sides of the issue. But if he wants

Democratic cooperation, he'd have to scrap pushing for Obamacare repeal and back a more limited plan to enact fixes. This would infuriate some Republicans, who are angry enough that, nine months into an all Republican Washington, Obamacare is still ticking. Lawmakers and lobbyists aren't optimistic that Trump can find enough common ground to get Republicans and Democrats on the same page.

-- **TAXES:** Democrats have been completely shut out of the tax reform discussions. The only people resembling Democrats in the room are Gary Cohn and Steven Mnuchin, two Trump administration officials who have donated to Democrats throughout their lives. It would take a miracle to change course at this point. **A REMINDER:** We are far from tax reform becoming a reality. Both chambers need to pass a budget, and we have not seen a shred of paper from the closed-door tax meetings.

-- **BASIC GOVERNANCE AND THE WALL:** Democrats and Republicans can keep the lights on together -- that much we've seen. They can lift the debt ceiling, if there are no legislative riders. Here's where Trump could run into a major problem. We're not sure if you've heard but the president wants to build a wall on the border with Mexico. He will not be able to do that with Democrats -- they are a hard no on a border wall. Can he strike some sort of deal to put the DREAM Act into law in exchange for an uptick border security? Sure. But that would be awfully tricky.

MR. PRESIDENT -- YOU STILL HAVE TO BE NICE TO MCCONNELL AND RYAN. Why? Because Democrats are in the minority in both chambers and have extremely limited ability to bring bills to the floor.

FROM 30K FEET -- NYT'S PETER BAKER: "Bound to No Party, Trump Upends 150 Years of Two-Party Rule": "President Trump demonstrated this past week that he still imagines himself a solitary cowboy as he abandoned Republican congressional leaders to forge a short-term fiscal deal with Democrats. Although elected as a Republican last year, Mr. Trump has shown in the nearly eight months in office that he is, in many ways, the first independent to hold the presidency since the advent of the current two-party system around the time of the Civil War.

"In recent weeks, he has quarreled more with fellow Republicans than with the opposition, blasting congressional leaders on Twitter, ousting former party officials in his White House, embracing primary challenges to incumbent lawmakers who defied him and blaming Republican figures for not advancing his policy agenda. On Friday, he addressed discontent about his approach with a Twitter post that started, 'Republicans, sorry,' as if he were not one of them, and said party leaders had a 'death wish.' ...

"None of which means that Mr. Trump has suddenly transformed himself into a center-hugging moderate. More situational than ideological -- critics would say opportunist -- Mr. Trump adjusts to the moment, and his temporary alignment with Democrats could easily unravel tomorrow. The deal he cut, after all, merely postponed a fight over spending and debt for three months. It did not resolve any substantive disagreements." <http://nyti.ms/2wigEPH>

WAP0'S TAKE -- "'Trump betrays everyone': The president has a long record as an unpredictable ally," by Ashley Parker and Phil Rucker: "President Trump prepared for the pivotal meeting with congressional leaders by huddling with his senior team - his chief of staff, his legislative director and the heads of Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget - to game out various scenarios on how to fund the government, raise the debt ceiling and provide Hurricane Harvey relief. But one option they never considered was the that one the president ultimately chose: cutting a deal with Democratic lawmakers, to the shock and ire of his own party.

"In agreeing to tie Harvey aid to a three-month extension of the debt ceiling and government funding, Trump burned the people who are ostensibly his allies. The president was an unpredictable - and, some would say, untrustworthy -- negotiating partner with not only congressional Republicans but also with his Cabinet members and top aides. Trump saw a deal that he thought was good for him -- and he seized it."

<http://wapo.st/2wSD91d>

-- DESPITE ALL THE GOP HAND-WRINGING, senior GOP aides say that everyone is being too dramatic and that lawmakers need to take a deep breath. This middle-of-the-road stuff is not permanent.

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** How are Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers helping create the future in science, medicine and national security? Learn more: hpe.com/supercomputing *****

THE LATEST ON HURRICANE IRMA ...

AP'S IRMA LEDEALL -- "'Pray for everybody': Irma begins its assault on Florida," by Tamara Lush and Jay Reeves in St. Petersburg, Florida: "Announcing itself with roaring 130 mph winds, Hurricane Irma plowed into the mostly emptied-out Florida Keys early Sunday for the start of what could be a slow, ruinous march up the state's west coast toward the heavily populated Tampa-St. Petersburg area. ... With an estimated 127,000 huddling in shelters statewide, the storm lashed the low-lying string of islands with drenching rain and knocked out power to over 1 million customers even hundreds of miles from Irma's center.

"About 30,000 people heeded orders to evacuate the Keys as the storm closed in, but an untold number refused to leave, in part because to many storm-hardened residents, staying behind in the face of danger is a point of pride. While the projected track showed Irma raking the state's Gulf Coast, forecasters warned that the entire Florida peninsula - including the Miami metropolitan area of 6 million people - was in extreme peril from the monstrous storm, almost 400 miles wide. Nearly 7 million people in the Southeast were warned to get out of the storm's path, including 6.4 million in Florida alone."

<http://bit.ly/2xTumcW>

-- JOHN DICKERSON speaks with **SEN. MARCO RUBIO (R-FLA.)** on **CBS'S "FACE**

THE NATION": DICKERSON: "Senator, you and I have talked over the years have talked about trust in government and people losing faith in their government. Do you see any of that? I mean are people not taking things seriously because sort of either because of crying wolf or because they lost faith in in voices of authority on these kinds of things?" **RUBIO:** "No I can't say that in this case. I really can't. I think that people have really responded. You see an enormous amount of people have acted. The most massive evacuation I think in the history of the state, millions of people have moved. And I think coming in the aftermath of those images from Harvey people have really jumped on it.

"So I think the bigger concern that we have is we've got -- this is a very unique situation. The whole state is impacted. A lot of the relief efforts are being directed from places that now themselves are in, in the path of, of the storm. And we have a lot of people for example that left South Florida, that drove to Orlando, or Tampa who are now figuring out maybe I need to go back to Miami or something or, or Fort Lauderdale or Palm Beach. This is no time to be on the road. This is a very unique storm because of its size and scope. You usually are able to say that there's some safe place in the state that you can go to. In this particular case, virtually the entire state is being impacted by the storm."

-- **@PascoSheriff:** "To clarify, DO NOT shoot weapons @ #Irma. You won't make it turn around & it will have very dangerous side effects".

-- **"Weather Channel Goes Into Overdrive Covering Back-to-Back Hurricanes,"** by NYT's David Gelles: "The Weather Channel averaged nearly 1.3 million viewers during prime time over the first half of last week, up sharply from an average of 150,000 viewers during the last week of July, when the weather wasn't a story, according to Nielsen." <http://nyti.ms/2ePhA7J>

FLORIDA FRONT PAGES - Miami Herald: "Damage from Irma could surpass Andrew's aftermath" <http://bit.ly/2wSFS9b> ... **Tampa Bay Times:** "READY OR NOT -- Irma is projected to hit Tampa Bay today, and 'This is a killer hurricane.'" <http://bit.ly/2vO1dPG> ... **Naples Daily News:** "BRACE FOR IMPACT -- Category 4 Irma Could Smash Southwest Florida Sunday" <http://bit.ly/2eP2e2W> ... **Tallahassee Democrat:** "STRIKING DISTANCE" <http://bit.ly/2vOjiNJ> ... **South Florida Sun Sentinel:** "IN IT TOGETHER" <http://bit.ly/2wT12UN> ...

... **Florida Today of Melbourne:** "STATE OF FEAR -- 15 pages of Hurricane Irma coverage inside" <http://bit.ly/2xTZPeT> ... **Sarasota Herald Tribune:** "IRMA COMING -- Residents urged to be ready for a storm as big as our state" <http://bit.ly/2vNVDN3> ... **Panama City News Herald:** "HERE SHE COMES -- Mainland U.S. braces for massive Irma" <http://bit.ly/2xUmVSY> ... **Pensacola News Journal:** "Governor Warns of Irma's Storm Surge" <http://bit.ly/2wQMJSK>

POLITICO INVESTIGATION -- "How U.S. News college rankings promote economic inequality on campus: Once ladders of social mobility, universities

increasingly reinforce existing wealth, fueling a backlash that helped elect Donald Trump," by Benjamin Wermund: "America's universities are getting two report cards this year. The first, from the Equality of Opportunity Project, brought the shocking revelation that many top universities, including Princeton and Yale, admit more students from the top 1 percent of earners than the bottom 60 percent combined. The second, from U.S. News and World Report, is due on Tuesday - with Princeton and Yale among the contenders for the top spot in the annual rankings. The two are related: A POLITICO review shows that the criteria used in the U.S. News rankings - a measure so closely followed in the academic world that some colleges have built them into strategic plans - create incentives for schools to favor wealthier students over less wealthy applicants." <http://politi.co/2xXgLIL>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "NATO's Stoltenberg says North Korea's 'reckless behaviour' requires global response," by Reuters: "North Korea's 'reckless behaviour' is a global threat and requires a global response, the head of the NATO military alliance said on Sunday. ... 'The reckless behaviour of North Korea is a global threat and requires a global response and that of course also includes NATO,' NATO head Jens Stoltenberg said in an interview with BBC television. Asked whether an attack on the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam would trigger NATO's Article 5, which requires each member of the alliance to come to the defence of any other, Stoltenberg said: 'I will not speculate about whether Article 5 will be applied in such a situation.'" <http://reut.rs/2jfb2Ez>

-- "Vast new intelligence haul fuels next phase of fight against Islamic State," by LATimes' W.J. Hennigan: "U.S. intelligence analysts have gained valuable insights into Islamic State's planning and personnel from a vast cache of digital data and other material recovered from bombed-out offices, abandoned laptops and the cellphones of dead fighters in recently liberated areas of Iraq and Syria. In the most dramatic gain, U.S. officials over the last two months have added thousands of names of known or suspected Islamic State operatives to an international watch list used at airports and other border crossings. The Interpol database now contains about 19,000 names. The intelligence haul - the largest since U.S. forces entered the war in mid-2014 - threatens to overwhelm already stretched counter-terrorism and law enforcement agencies in Europe." <http://lat.ms/2jfu8dl>

INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE -- "Former Sessions aides chart different paths in Trump's White House," by Andrew Restuccia, Nancy Cook, and Josh Dawsey: "In Donald Trump's White House, there are few tales about power more instructive than the story of Jeff Sessions' two former top aides. Both Stephen Miller, Trump's senior policy adviser, and Rick Dearborn, a White House deputy chief of staff, started out in the same place - as top congressional aides in Jeff Sessions' Senate office. Together, they worked as Trump campaign advisers, and then won senior administration jobs.

"But while Miller has rapidly accumulated power in the West Wing by personally advising the president on high-profile policy questions like immigration and publicly defending Trump on television and in the briefing room, Dearborn has become

increasingly marginalized, having struggled to form a close bond with the president, the new chief of staff and Trump's family

"Their diverging stock in the administration offers a case study in how to thrive in Trump's West Wing. Among the lessons: The president often responds to aides who mirror his big personality, while wallflowers tend to get ignored. And the president deeply values loyalty to himself, with little interest in the relationships top aides and other staffers bring into the West Wing. But getting close to the president has its risks, as the long list of former Trump White House aides shows." <http://politi.co/2xdYqD2>

SUNDAY BEST ...

SEVERAL SUNDAY SHOWS were preempted due to the storm. NBC's "Meet the Press" and ABC's "This Week" both turned to storm coverage.

JAKE TAPPER speaks with **SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.)** on **CNN's "STATE OF THE UNION":** **TAPPER:** "I hope I don't run this clip for another 50 years, but how do you want the American people to remember you?" **MCCAIN:** "He served his country. And not always right. Made a lot of mistakes. Made a lot of errors. But served his country, and I hope we can add, honorably." *The clip* <http://snpy.tv/2xXJFSD>

-- **TAPPER:** "You went through chemo and radiation to fight this cancer. When do you find out if it worked?" **MCCAIN:** "On Monday we will take a MRI, but so far all indications are very good. But again I'm not trying to paint this as a rosy picture. This is a very virulent form of cancer, it has to be fought against. We have new technologies ... that make chances much better. But Jake, you know, every life has to end one way or another. I think it was the playwright [William Saroyan] ... he said I always knew that no one could live forever but I thought there might be one exception. You gotta have joy, joy. Listen, those joyful memories of the campaign in 2000 are some of the most enjoyable times of my life. We were the underdogs, we were fighting our way up, we went to Sedona, you remember, everything was so magic about that campaign."

REP JIM JORDAN (R-OHIO) to **CHRIS WALLACE** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY":** **@FoxNewsSunday:** ".@Jim_Jordan on his confidence in @SpeakerRyan: We meet with him every week, no one is talking about changing leadership."

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS speaks to **FLORIDA GOV. RICK SCOTT** on **ABC'S "THIS WEEK":** **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "What is your biggest worry right now?" **SCOTT:** "My biggest worry is the people that didn't evacuate and they don't understand the risk of the storm surge. George, last year, we got storm surge up in the panhandle. And this water just comes in. And it just fills up your house. And then it goes out. And people -- this lady -- I can tell you a story about a lady, she was -- she wanted to stay because of her pets. She was in a one-story house. The water got to three feet, she knew she wouldn't survive. Thank god when she left her house to try to get away, there was a high-water vehicle just leaving and she got -- she survived. Of course, her pets didn't. But, I just hope people understand that this storm surge is just deadly."

THE JUICE ...

NICK AND VAL'S NIGHT -- "Valery Galasso, Nicholas Merrill" -- N.Y. Times: "The bride, 31, is a senior policy adviser in the office of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. From 2010 to 2015, she served in the Obama administration in Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s office of legislative affairs. She graduated from the University of Connecticut and received a master's degree in public policy from Johns Hopkins. ... The groom, 34, is the communications director in the office of Hillary Clinton in New York. He has worked for Mrs. Clinton since 2007, and was the traveling press secretary for her 2016 presidential campaign. He graduated from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y." ***With pic***
<http://nyti.ms/2xTK5c0>

-- **SPOTTED:** Hillary Clinton, Huma Abedin, Jon Davidson, Bari Lurie and Jeff Westerberg, Michael Kives, Brian Fallon, Heather Samuelson and Mitch Herckis, Sara Latham (who was in from London), Rachel Kelly, Adrienne Elrod, Angel Urena, Christina Reynolds, De'ara Balenger, Connolly Keigher, Bob Barnett and Rita Braver, Dan Schwerin, Mike Feldman, Tina Flournoy, Opal Vadhan, Rob Russo, Matt McKenna, Kamy! Bazbaz, Jason Rahlan. ***Philippe Reines and Nick's mom Becky hosted the event.***

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: SOUTH BEND, INDIANA, MAYOR PETE BUTTIGIEG** is in Des Moines to speak at Progress Iowa's Corn Feed: **HERE IS WHAT HE'LL SAY:** "Nothing about politics is theoretical for me. I've sat with loved ones facing cancer and tried to figure out what we would do if Congress kicks them off Obamacare. I've looked into the eyes of an 8-year old American boy who lost his father to deportation and tried to tell him things were going to be okay. I've called 911 on a young man having an overdose, and rolled him over so he wouldn't choke to death.

"I've stood in a basement flooded by extreme rainfall hitting South Bend in just the way scientists have warned us about for decades. And I've carried a weapon in a foreign land on the orders of an American president. See, when Donald Trump and his sons were working on Season 7 of Celebrity Apprentice, I was driving and guarding convoys outside the wire in Afghanistan.

"I had a lot of different responsibilities , but the job that mattered most was to make sure the men and women in my vehicle got where they were going, alive. And when they got in my vehicle, they didn't care if I was a Democrat or a Republican. They cared about whether I had selected the route with the fewest IED threats, not whether my immigrant father was documented or undocumented. They cared about whether my M-4 was locked and loaded and whether I knew how to use it, not whether I was going home to a girlfriend or a boyfriend. They just wanted to get home safe, like I did." ***The full speech*** <http://politi.co/2wSLr9n>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Waves crash over a seawall at the mouth of the Miami River from Biscayne Bay, Fla., as Hurricane Irma passes on Sept. 10 in Miami. | AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee

KATY TUR on the **SUNDAY N.Y.T. OP-ED PAGE: "The Trump Fever Never Breaks":**
"For more than 500 days, I watched as Mr. Trump's campaign grew from an awkward rally around a backyard pool in June 2015 to a raucous, 10,000-person convention center event in November 2016. In that same time, I also watched as Mr. Trump's candidacy survived a procession of death predictions. ...

"When I was out on the road following Mr. Trump, I sneaked in a bit of "Game of Thrones" on my laptop between rallies. What I learned, to paraphrase the show, is that what is dead may never die -- and, in Mr. Trump's case, may only rise stronger....In August 2015, a month after a high-ranking [RNC] operative promised me that America would never tolerate a man with no military service disparaging an American military hero, I was standing on a football field in Mobile, Ala., surrounded by 30,000 screaming Trump fans, an unheard-of turnout six months before a primary. Were they mad about the candidate's words on Mr. McCain? No. The opposite. 'He's not afraid of anybody,' one woman told me." <http://nyti.ms/2vNep7x>

-- **SNEAK PEEK: JILL ABRAMSON** reviewed Katy's "Unbelievable: My Front-Row Seat to the Craziest Campaign in American History" for the Times. The review and book are out Tuesday. It is already the No. 1 election book on Amazon. ... **\$16.19 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2vNfRqj>

WHAT KEN GROSS IS READING -- "Nestled in House Spending Bill: Campaign Finance Deregulation," by WSJ's Cezary Podkul: "House Republicans are backing several provisions that could reshape campaign finance rules ahead of next year's midterm elections as spending negotiations continue this fall. ... While the House package is unlikely to advance in the Senate, its provisions could become bargaining chips in the negotiations leading up to the next government funding deadline, now Dec. 8. ... If they do, churches may be able to contribute to candidates without fear of losing their tax-exempt status, furthering President Donald Trump's promise to 'get rid of and totally destroy' a law that forbids such activity.

"Corporations would be able to ask their employees to donate to unlimited numbers of trade associations' political action groups instead of limiting employee solicitations to one group per year. Other measures included in the bill would continue to prevent the Internal Revenue Service and the Securities and Exchange Commission from implementing rules that would affect political activities of 501(C)(4) nonprofits and publicly traded corporations, respectively. And the government would again be prohibited from requiring federal contractors to disclose their political contributions and campaign expenditures." <http://on.wsj.com/2xIXayw>

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** A nation's strength is increasingly measured by its technical prowess. As the designer and builder of more supercomputers than any other company in the world, Hewlett Packard Enterprise is proud to lead the way in one of the future's most important technologies. Visit hpe.com/supercomputing to learn more about how Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers are helping create the future in science, medicine and national security.

2020 WATCH -- "How California could jolt the 2020 presidential race," by David Siders and Gabe Debenedetti, with a Los Angeles dateline: "California is pushing forward with a plan to change the state's primary date from June to March, a move that could scramble the 2020 presidential nominating contest and swing the early weight of the campaign to the west. If adopted by the legislature this week - as is widely expected - and signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown, the early primary would allocate California's massive haul of delegates just after the nation's first contests in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina.

"The earlier primary could benefit at least two potential presidential contenders from California - U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti - while jeopardizing the prospects of other candidates who will struggle to raise enough early money to compete in expensive media markets in the nation's most populous state. 'In all probability, the winner of the California primary would be the nominee,' said Don Fowler, a former Democratic National Committee chairman from South Carolina."
<http://politi.co/2gUjnJv>

-- "Retirement watch: The four California members of Congress most likely to bow out by 2018," by L.A. Times' Sarah D. Wire -- *featuring Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Reps. Grace Napolitano, Dana Rohrabacher and Duncan Hunter*
<http://lat.ms/2vNvLkM>

MEDIAWATCH -- "The Wall Street Journal's Trump problem: Dozens have left the paper in the past year and interviews with current and ex-staffers show outrage over pressure from management to normalize Trump," by The Guardian's Lucia Graves.
<http://bit.ly/2wQWdgS>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--"This Private Investigator Was The Original Most Interesting Man In The World," by Eamon Javers in BuzzFeed: "The story of Tom Corbally, a private investigator whose career crisscrossed continents and spanned decades, is its own secret history of the 20th century." <http://bzfd.it/2xVN5VZ>

--"There's No Such Thing as a Good Dog," by Wes Siler in Outside magazine: "People love to tell me how lucky I am to have a good dog like Wiley. But they're dead wrong - there was no luck involved. Wiley's good behavior and good temperament are products of four years of hard work, nothing else. The more people who understand this,

the more people there will be who have 'good' dogs too." <http://bit.ly/2xSDWN9> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--**"Remembering Moynihan in the Age of Trump,"** by Charles F. McElwee III in The American Scholar: "If the late senator-scholar were alive, he would see his most acute societal warnings confirmed." <http://theam.cn/2wNa87F>

--**"The Tamarind is Always Sour,"** by Keane Shum in Granta: "By law, the more than one million Rohingya in Myanmar are almost all excluded from Myanmar citizenship, making them the largest stateless group in the world. ... There are anywhere between two to three million Rohingya in the world, and the large majority of them do not exist on paper." <http://bit.ly/2vV9m9f>

--**"Imagination is a powerful tool: Why is philosophy afraid of it?"** by Amy Kind in Aeon Magazine: "Hume ... talked about how our facility for fantasy helps us to move beyond and change our present reality. One need only think of how Leonardo da Vinci's fantastical flying machines paved the way for the Wright brothers, or how H G Wells's novel 'The War of the Worlds' (1898) inspired the first liquid-fuelled space rocket, to see the truth of this insight." <http://bit.ly/2f9RlcH>

--**"The Japanese Origins of Modern Fine Dining,"** by Meghan McCarron in Eater Magazine -- per Longreads.com's description: "How kaiseki - Japan's formal dining tradition - became a major (though often unacknowledged) influence on modern haute cuisine." <http://bit.ly/2wg4Lto>

--**"What Does an Innocent Man Have to Do to Go Free? Plead Guilty,"** by Megan Rose in ProPublica: "A case in Baltimore - in which two men were convicted of the same murder and cleared by DNA 20 years later - shows how far prosecutors will go to preserve a conviction." <http://bit.ly/2gUbKQy> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"Donald Trump Slept Here - and So Did I: A Visit to a Presidential Home in Queens,"** by Newsweek's Alexander Nazaryan: "Above the bed I am sitting on is a sign encased in a wooden frame. 'In this bedroom,' it says in calligraphic font, 'President Donald J. Trump was likely conceived, by his parents, Fred and Mary Trump. The world has never been the same.'" <http://bit.ly/2wPkUu6>

--**"Inside the Growing Guest Worker Program Trapping Indian Students in Virtual Servitude,"** by Nikhil Swaminathan in the Sept./Oct. issue of Mother Jones: The article "takes an in-depth look at America's Optional Practical Training program and its effect on Indian students and workers. Swaminathan spoke with three dozen guest workers, and analyzed data and lawsuits related to the issue, to illustrate how the OPT program is trapping guest workers in student loan debt and without labor protections. Furthermore, he takes a look at the role of American universities as willing partners in this practice, and the corrupt businesses or 'body shops' that prey on these workers." <http://bit.ly/2vM6EPi>

--"Hacking Health: Has Silicon Valley Found Its Soul on a Mountaintop in Utah?"

by Newsweek's Abigail Jones: "Started by five young entrepreneurs in 2008, [Summit is] known for drawing participants like Bill Clinton, Richard Branson, actress Sophia Bush and GE vice chair Beth Comstock, and taking attendees (who range from innovators and artists to academics and scientists) on cruises, glamping expeditions-even to the White House." <http://bit.ly/2wgri9z>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) standing with veterans last night when they did the "Waive Your Caps" tribute at the Nats baseball game ... Patrick Ewing at dinner last night at Legal Sea Foods holding court in the back room ... former Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd boarding a delayed flight yesterday to Hartford from DCA (h/t @KMAAndersonDC)

SPOTTED celebrating Neil Alpert's 40th birthday at BLT Prime last night at Trump Hotel: Lisa Spies, Teri Galvez, Michael Steele (former Maryland LT Gov./RNC Chair) and Morgan Ortagus.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Luke Mullins, senior writer at Washingtonian and **Christina Lennon**, senior manager of client experience at Charles Schwab, had a reception last night to celebrate their upcoming marriage. They are getting married in late October in Scotland. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2xTQwLW> **SPOTTED:** Paul Kane, Charlotte Sellmyer, Brody and Lauren Mullins, Susan Davis and Adam Aigner-Treworgy.

WEEKEND WEDDING -- "Tatiana Schlossberg, George Moran" -- Times: "The couple met at Yale, from which they both graduated with distinction. Ms. Schlossberg, 27, was until July a reporter at The New York Times, where she covered climate change and the environment. She also received a master's degree in United States history from the University of Oxford, England. She is a daughter of Caroline B. Kennedy and Edwin A. Schlossberg of New York. The bride's father, an artist, founded ESI Design, an interactive design firm in New York, of which he is the principal designer. Her mother served as United States ambassador to Japan from 2013 to 2017. ... The bride is a granddaughter of President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Mr. Moran, 28, is a fourth-year medical student at Columbia." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2vO9u66>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: NYC PR exec **Josh Nass**, who speaks five languages and says "although I'm told it's unpopular to confess to this these days, my first language is Russian." **How he's celebrating:** "I plan to have brunch with my close family, followed by dinner with friends at The Prime Grill. My kosher dietary restrictions don't allow me to explore the many steakhouses that I see everywhere I go in New York City, but fortunately it's New York, so there are plenty of good kosher options." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2wRVsTY>

BIRTHDAYS: Sara Bonjean (hat tips: hubby Ron and Sean Spicer) ... CAP president Neera Tanden, celebrating by spending the day at the Progress Iowa Corn Feed, where she is one of the featured speakers (h/t Lindsay Hamilton) ... Jess McIntosh, writer, speaker and Democratic strategist and alum of Hillary for America, Franken and EMILY's List (h/t Jon Haber) ... Bill O'Reilly ... Andrew Shapiro, founder and managing director at Beacon Global Strategies and a Hillary and State alum ... Hunter Walker, White House correspondent at Yahoo News ... Corinne Hoare, professor at AU's School of Communication (h/t Spicer) ... WSJ's Mara Gay ... 1776 founder Donna Harris (h/ts Peter Cherukuri and Kurt Bardella) ... James Killen ... Dan Centinello ... USA Today SCOTUS reporter Richard Wolf ... Politico's Nahal "Halley" Toosi and Paulina Mangubat ... Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) ... former Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.) ... Trey Yingst, chief WH correspondent for OANN ...

... **Michael Moroney**, managing supervisor at FleishmanHillard ... Deirdre Hackleman ... Charlie Szold, public affairs consultant at Midland Strategies ... Steve Brusk, CNN White House and Congress supervising producer ... Molly Bordonaro ... Amanda Cowie, head of business and strategy comms at Bloomberg Media (h/t Ashley Bahnken) ... Jocelyn Miller Zeitoff, AtlanticLIVE director of business development and a Knopf and Weber Shandwick alum, celebrating with a night out in the District (h/t Patrick Garrigan) ... Jack Rivers, associate at Goldman Sachs ... Lauren Defranco ... Rey Ramsey ... Mahen Gunaratna, deputy comms director for Mayor Bill de Blasio ... Heather Barber ... Andy Levin, chief legal officer at Relativity Media ... Rachel Teron DeGirolamo ... Jane Gross ... Karen Steinberg ... Kimberly Marie Abbott ... Christina Estrada Teczar ... CNBC's Hadley Gamble (h/t Keil) ... Barbara Lippert ... Oliver Kim ... former Sen. John E. Sununu (R-N.H.) ... Justin Wiley ... Justin Mikita ... Tia Torhorst ... Reynolds Honold ... Justin Cooper (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 7/7/2017 10:55:43 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Postmates: CRUZ rises in healthcare debate -- WASHINGTON PRESS descends on PALCO, KANSAS, as repeal looks further away -- PUTIN-TRUMP meet at 9:45 -- 'HIGH ANXIETY' at CNN -- VANESSA MORRONE and MICHAEL AMBROSINI engaged

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Postmates
07/07/2017 06:52 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

YIKES - 5:39 a.m.: "PARIS (AP) - Paris prosecutors investigating suspected irregularities in Macron trip to Las Vegas when he was government minister."
<http://bit.ly/2txe2gV>

Happy Friday. IF YOU TALK PRIVATELY to most Hill Republicans, they'll tell you they're in a jam on Obamacare and don't know how -- or if -- they'll get out of it. Forget tax reform by the end of the year for the moment and let's resurface in reality: Republicans are having a hard time repealing and replacing Obamacare after a half-dozen years of promises.

MOVE THE BILL TO THE RIGHT, you lose moderates, move it to the left, conservatives dash and, either way, when they send it to the House, it faces an uncertain future. **AND NOW**, Sen. Ted Cruz is rising. His plan is under consideration and is expected to be scored for budgetary impact by the Congressional Budget Office, one of many signs it is in play in the healthcare debate, according to multiple sources involved. It basically allows insurers to sell non-Obamacare compliant plans, which would -- if you listen to the provisions' supporters -- economically devastate the Affordable Care Act.

-- **HOT DOC:** Check out how Cruz is explaining his amendment. <http://politi.co/2sNfAX0>

-- **WHAT CONSERVATIVES THINK** : A top conservative on the Hill: "The first round of the health care fight revealed the votes to fully repeal Obamacare just do not exist in the House and Senate -- despite six years of campaign promises. Now conservatives are uniting behind an amendment that they say could effectively undo Obamacare through

the marketplace since the votes aren't there to do it legislatively. Ted Cruz's amendment would allow HHS to grant waivers to states that allows insurance companies to offer an unlimited number of non-ACA compliant health plans if they also offer at least one 'qualified health plan' (QHP) in both silver and gold coverage levels. Conservatives say this will result in substantially lower premiums and more choice for consumers. Opponents -- and conservatives behind closed doors -- say it will effectively kill what's left of the ACA economically."

-- **THE MATH** : It's hard to see how Mitch McConnell threads the needle here. He needs opponents like Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) and skeptics like Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) to switch their votes. And even if Sen. Ted Cruz is in play, McConnell will have to find a way to get his home state Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) on board. Paul, who is holding side talks with the president, was never truly thought to be in play for the GOP.

CASE IN POINT -- WASHINGTON MEDIA DESCENDS ON PALCO, KANSAS, TO HEAR FROM JERRY MORAN -- POLITICO'S SEUNG MIN KIM: "Moran gets an earful on Obamacare repeal at town hall" <http://politi.co/2txdzLG> ... **WAPO'S DAVE WEIGEL:** "A town hall in Kansas shows Republican struggles with health-care bill" <http://wapo.st/2sNEiqn> ... **NYT'S TOM KAPLAN:** "Unlikely Holdout Underscores Challenge for Senate Health Bill" <http://nyti.ms/2swDSQT>

... **AND LOCAL MEDIA TOO -- KANSAS CITY STAR'S BRYAN LOWRY:** "Packed town hall in Palco, Kan., urges Moran to stand firm against GOP health bill" <http://bit.ly/2tYBxT9> ... **WICHITA EAGLE'S JONATHAN SHORMAN** : "National health debate swirls around Moran at town hall" <http://bit.ly/2to3sKB>

-- **SEUNG MIN KIM:** "[M]oran ... rattled off a litany of concerns with the Senate GOP plan ... stressing to an overflow crowd in this tiny rural town that he would not support the existing draft as written. During a town hall in this largely conservative area, Moran called it 'troublesome' that Kansas, which did not expand Medicaid under Obamacare, would under the GOP plan have to help shoulder the entitlement's costs in states that did. Moran also raised concerns about 'people with disabilities, the frail and elderly' when it came to potential changes to Medicaid, a program that Moran said 'has significant value.'

"Still, he made clear his opposition to Obamacare, telling the crowd of about 150 people that after visiting all 127 hospitals in the state, 'there is not a hospital that I could find in Kansas that is financially better off as a result of the Affordable Care Act.' But he also danced away from the 'full repeal' rhetoric that has dominated the Republican Party in the seven years since Obamacare was signed into law. 'The Affordable Care Act creates significant difficulties that still need major attention,' Moran told reporters after the town hall. 'But I think at this point, it's time to figure out how ... to get rid of the bad things and improve on the things that need to be improved.'" <http://politi.co/2txdzLG>

-- **SMK'S TAKEAWAY:** "[I]n this rural northwestern Kansas town, Moran stresses that coverage for preexisting conditions have to be protected. He rails against the decision

by his own leadership to draft its Obamacare repeal measure almost entirely in private. The genial senator even steers away from derisively referring to the 2010 health care law as Obamacare, instead using its official term: The Affordable Care Act. ...

"He also veered off the party message by saying that he would have preferred a process to 'figure out where there are 60 votes to pass something that is so important to many Americans,' implicitly rejecting the partisan fast-track approach GOP leaders deployed. It's 'almost impossible to try to solve' the Republicans' health care dilemma with just 50 votes, Moran added." <http://politi.co/2sNyk8S>

-- **NOTE:** If Jerry Moran is truly a holdout -- and it sure sounds like he is, from SMK's reporting -- it's real difficult to see how an Obamacare repeal passes the Senate. Moran won his last election with 70 percent of the vote, and his principal political hurdle -- generally speaking -- would be a primary challenge. The town hall was in Rooks County, Seung Min writes, which "gave Trump 84 percent of the vote." Yet he sounds **very** skittish about repealing the law.

-- **"Rand and Donald's wild health care ride:** Rand Paul and Donald Trump have gone back and forth on an Obamacare repeal strategy, repeatedly undermining GOP leadership's plans," by Burgess Everett and Josh Dawsey. <http://politi.co/2swqfBr>

THE BACKUP PLAN -- "McConnell says GOP must shore up ACA insurance markets if Senate bill dies," by WaPo's Juliet Eilperin and Amy Goldstein: "Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said Thursday that if his party fails to muster 50 votes for its plan to rewrite the Affordable Care Act, it will have no choice but to draft a more modest bill with Democrats to support the law's existing insurance markets. The remarks, made at a Rotary Club lunch in Glasgow, Ky., represent a significant shift for the veteran legislator. While he had raised the idea last week that Republicans may have to turn to Democrats if they cannot pass their own bill, his words mark the first time he has explicitly raised the prospect of shoring up the ACA.

"If my side is unable to agree on an adequate replacement, then some kind of action with regard to the private health insurance market must occur,' McConnell said. 'No action is not an alternative. We've got the insurance markets imploding all over the country, including in this state.'" <http://wapo.st/2tPunjJ>

TIM PHILLIPS INTERVIEW -- "Koch brothers political chief: Health care effort a 'disappointment'" <http://cbsn.ws/2uxurlH> ... "We're not ' beholden' to GOP lawmakers" <http://cbsn.ws/2tOIZju>

SCALISE UPDATE: "Scalise undergoes surgery for infection," by Rachael Bade: "House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, the Louisiana Republican shot at a congressional baseball practice three weeks ago, underwent surgery to manage growing infection in his wounds, his doctors said Thursday. Scalise's medical team at MedStar Washington Hospital Center had downgraded his status from 'fair' to 'serious' on Wednesday night after the infection was discovered. He was readmitted into the Intensive Care Unit for

close monitoring.

"Scalise 'tolerated the procedure well,' his medical team said Thursday evening, adding that he 'remains in serious condition.' During a press conference several days after the shooting, Scalise's medical team said they expected the congressman would be confronted with such infection at some point during his recovery."

<http://politi.co/2svn24O>

PALACE INTRIGUE -- "Trump's leaks crackdown sends chills through national security world," by Ali Watkins and Josh Dawsey: "National security officials across the federal government say they are seeing new restrictions on who can access sensitive information, fueling fears in the intelligence and security community that the Trump administration has stepped up a stealthy operation to smoke out leakers. Officials at various national security agencies also say they are becoming more concerned that the administration is carefully tracking what they're doing and who they're talking to - then plotting to use them as a scapegoat or accuse them of leaks.

"One U.S. official voiced concern over even talking to their superiors about a benign call from a reporter. The agency this official works for had started limiting staff's access to information, they said, and it would make it far easier to figure out who was talking to people in the media. There was suspicion, the official said, that the agency was even tracking what they printed, to keep tabs on what information they were accessing. ... A half dozen officials across the national security community described to POLITICO a series of subtle and no-so-subtle changes that have led to an increasingly tense and paranoid working environment rooted in the White House's obsession with leaks."

<http://politi.co/2swKApU>

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IT'S HAPPENING -- TRUMP-PUTIN AT 9:45 A.M. -- "Trump readies for his turn with Putin," by Michael Crowley: "Last week, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said Trump would come to the meeting with 'no specific agenda,' sparking concern among Russia experts and former U.S. officials that Putin, a former KGB officer who recruited spies, might have an upper hand to manipulate Trump. 'The biggest challenge in these meetings is Putin's tendency to try to run out the clock with history lessons and litanies of Russian grievances, so you're constantly playing defense. The art is absorbing this, pushing back on the rhetoric only where essential, and then shifting to the topics you actually want addressed. That's why going in without an agenda is so damaging,' said Jon Finer, who served as chief of staff to former Secretary of State John Kerry and has attended meetings with the Russian leader. 'It's a recipe not just wasting time, but having the entire conversation on his topics and his terms,' Finer added.

"The two men are scheduled to meet for 30 minutes, and will reportedly be accompanied only by their top diplomats -- Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov -- and translators." <http://politi.co/2sTRPrr>

TRUMP AND PUTIN briefly shook hands this morning, per the AP, quoting a Kremlin official.

NEIL MACFARQUHAR: "For Russia, Trump-Putin Meeting Is a Sure Winner":
<http://nyti.ms/2tTAZx9>

-- **IVO DAALDER**, former U.S. ambassador to NATO (@IvoHDaalder): "Total government experience in the room? Russia: 80+ years US: Less than 12 months".

--@philipoltermann: "White House says Trump to meet Putin @ 3:45 [local time today], which means they have to skip 3:30 meeting with rest of G20 on climate change & energy".

-- **"Russians Are Said to Be Suspects in Nuclear Site Hackings,"** by Bloomberg's Michael Riley, Jennifer A. Dlouhy, and Bryan Gruley: "Hackers working for a foreign government recently breached at least a dozen U.S. power plants, including the Wolf Creek nuclear facility in Kansas, according to current and former U.S. officials, sparking concerns the attackers were searching for vulnerabilities in the electrical grid. The rivals could be positioning themselves to eventually disrupt the nation's power supply, warned the officials, who noted that a general alert was distributed to utilities a week ago. Adding to those concerns, hackers recently infiltrated an unidentified company that makes control systems for equipment used in the power industry, an attack that officials believe may be related. The chief suspect is Russia." <https://bloom.bg/2swu3CG>

-- **HAARETZ'S BARAK RAVID: "Israel Tells U.S. It Doesn't Want Russia Policing Safe Zones in Southern Syria":** "An American envoy came to Israel two weeks ago and held talks with senior Israeli officials about establishing de-escalation zones, otherwise known as safe zones, in southern Syria near the Israeli and Jordanian borders as part of an effort to end Syria's civil war.

"Israel told Washington that it opposes having Russian forces supervise what happens in these zones, senior Israeli officials said. The idea of establishing de-escalation zones arose after U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January. Both the White House and the Kremlin have pushed this idea as a way to end the civil war. In early April, Haaretz reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed receptiveness to the idea to both Washington and Moscow, viewing it as a way to keep Iran and Hezbollah away from Israel's border." <http://bit.ly/2to75jO>

MEANWHILE... -- "U.S., other G-20 nations near compromise on climate," by Andrew Restuccia: "The United States and other major economies are nearing a compromise on climate change, one of the thorniest issues facing world leaders at the G-20 summit in Germany. After days of preliminary talks, G-20 negotiators are

increasingly hopeful they can settle on a joint communique in which the United States underscores its intent to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement while the other nations emphasize their support for the pact, according to a senior diplomat involved in the discussions.

"Diplomats stressed that the text remains fluid and could be rewritten at the insistence of President Donald Trump and other world leaders, who will join the closed-door discussions in Hamburg over the next 48 hours. But if it holds, the unity among the 19 other members of the G-20 would be a coup for German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other leaders who support strong action to tackle climate change. And it would further isolate the United States on the issue, underscoring that it is one of the few countries in the world that don't back the 2015 Paris deal." <http://politi.co/2uQ5Est>

REALITY CHECK -- "CNN parent's \$85B deal at little risk from Trump," by Steven Overly and Margaret Harding McGill: "President Donald Trump has only limited tools for venting his often-expressed fury at CNN, even as his administration weighs whether to approve AT&T's bid to purchase the network's parent company, Time Warner. Chief Trump strategist Steve Bannon has pushed the idea of blocking the merger, a White House official told POLITICO on Thursday, after months in which the president has accused the news network of airing 'fake' and 'dishonest' coverage of his administration. But the official added that Bannon hasn't mentioned the matter in recent days and that it does not appear to be at the top of his agenda.

"And many industry observers say Trump's Justice Department has no obvious antitrust arguments for blocking AT&T's \$85 billion deal, which would give the telecom and wireless giant control of an entertainment conglomerate whose holdings include CNN, HBO and the Warner Bros. movie studio. 'Just because you don't like CNN doesn't mean you can block a merger,' said Rich Greenfield, a media and tech analyst at the investment research firm BTIG. 'You still need a legal basis, and calling CNN 'fake news' or 'FNN' doesn't make the transaction illegal.'" <http://politi.co/2suXC7G>

-- "High Anxiety at CNN Amid Attacks From Trump and His Trolls," by The Daily Beast's Lloyd Grove: "The parents and wife of Andrew Kaczynski, author of the GIF story and leader of CNN's investigative K-File team, had received around 50 harassing phone calls each by Wednesday while other K-File team members had ugly messages -- apparently from Trump supporters -- left at their homes. 'The only thing I worry about is somebody getting hurt,' a CNN insider told The Daily Beast ... 'These far-right trolls are really threatening people and coming after people. Somebody's gonna do something stupid at some point. 'People really, really worry about the safety of all the prominent people who represent us on the air, and the people who are breaking news they don't like, or people in senior management ... I fear for all of them.'" <http://thebea.st/2tY9Bih>

-- FROM MORNING MEDIA -- BEN SMITH emails Joe Pompeo: "'It makes me sick that they're not out there defending a great reporter who is taking all the heat for them. Editors need to have reporters' backs, and to take responsibility for screw-ups. This, and the recent firings' -- for the record, officially they were resignations -- 'send a terrible

signal to reporters who are trying to do their jobs.' (A CNN rep last night didn't return an email asking if they'd like to respond.)"

-- **FIRST PERSON -- "I Found HanAssholeSolo's anti-Semitic Posts. Then, the Death Threats Started.** This is what it's like to report on extremism in the Trump era," by Jared Yates Sexton in POLITICO Magazine: <http://politi.co/2tPCAEG>

ON CAPITOL WARDROBE GATE -- There has been a lot of back and forth over the dress code in and around the House floor, which mandates a jacket, tie and pants for men, and covered shoulders and closed-toed shoes for women. No one loves getting dressed up. We all hang out in the Speaker's Lobby -- where the dress code is enforced -- and, yes, it's a pain sometimes to have to dress a certain way. It's the Capitol of the United States, so everyone tolerates it. We have nearly unfettered access to the building and to lawmakers. It's pretty awesome.

This is a rule that's long been in place and has been enforced pretty consistently in the decade we've been covering Congress. (If you forget your tie, pull a Matt Fuller and grab a member in the hallway). It's not Paul Ryan's fault -- the guy has other stuff to worry about. The same rules apply to how members of Congress dress, but it's a lot more difficult to scold an elected official about his or her garb than it is to scold a reporter. *The original CBS story* <http://cbsn.ws/2sNUdF8>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: The Springfield Fire Dept. and the Hazardous Materials Unit exit the Illinois Governor's office after a woman threw a powdery substance during the overtime session at the Illinois State Capitol on July 6 in Springfield. | Justin L. Fowler/The State Journal-Register via AP

CLINTON PROBES CONTINUE -- "Loretta Lynch denies offering assurances to Clinton campaign over email probe," by Austin Wright: "Former Attorney General Loretta Lynch pledged Thursday to cooperate with a Senate Judiciary Committee investigation into whether she assured the Hillary Clinton campaign last year that the FBI probe into Clinton's emails wouldn't go too far. In a statement from her lawyer, Lynch also denied ever making such an assurance to a former Clinton campaign aide, Amanda Renteria - an allegation fueled by a Russian intelligence memo that's credibility has been called into question." <http://politi.co/2uwp4TH>

KAMALA HARRIS IN TODAY'S NYT -- "Senator, (Un)Interrupted: Kamala Harris's Rise Among Democrats," by Matt Flegenheimer: "California's very junior senator has emerged as the latest iteration of a bipartisan archetype: the Great Freshman Hope, a telegenic object of daydreaming projection - justified or not - for a party adrift and removed from executive power. ... Like the Senate newcomers Barack Obama or Marco

Rubio before her, Ms. Harris - a 52-year-old former prosecutor with a profane streak, a lawyerly aversion to 'false choices' and an affection for the rapper Too Short - has insisted that national aspirations are far from her mind. Like those men, she has not exactly ruled out the possibility, either.

"Unlike those men, she is not a man, a fact that has figured prominently in her introduction to mass audiences in a recurring (and highly rated) television series: Senate Intelligence Committee Hearing Into Possible Trump Ties to Russia. Twice recently, Ms. Harris's pointed questions and interjections during long-winded witness testimony have prompted uncommon interruptions from Republican colleagues, John McCain of Arizona and Richard M. Burr of North Carolina, the committee chairman, urging her to let the officials answer. In the outsize fallout, her supporters have questioned whether a white male senator would have been confronted the same way." <http://nyti.ms/2uRBKUg>

POLITICO MAGAZINE FRIDAY COVER - WHAT MARIA COMELLA IS READING - "Andrew Cuomo Could Beat Trump: But he'll have to win over the left first," by David Freedlander: "Cuomo looks very much like someone doing the spadework to run for president. His speeches ... are increasingly laced with the kind of Big Themes that become the rhetorical cornerstones of presidential campaigns. He rails against Washington, contrasting the gridlock of Congress against his own relatively smooth management of the previously dysfunctional statehouse, the misplaced priorities of national Republicans against the steady progress he has made in Albany. Over the past several months, Cuomo has hired Chris Christie's former chief of staff, a move widely seen as further burnishing his own bipartisan credentials; his aides have reached out to out-of-state donors about a possible fundraising swing later this year." <http://politi.co/2tPBwAD>

ISAAC DOVERE talks to **JULIE PACE** and **PETER BAKER:** "With the president posting a fantasy video of wrestling with CNN, Isaac Dovere sat down for Friday's Off Message podcast with White House press corps vets Julie Pace of the AP and Peter Baker of the New York Times to talk about wrestling with the beat. Is Trump's war with the media all just theatrics? Pace: 'I don't think it's a show in the sense that I do think that they see this as part of the agenda. This is something that they believe is central to Trump's success, is to try to undermine negative coverage about him.'

"Is this really so different from Obama and other presidents who've hated their press coverage? Baker: 'This is not the first president who thought all this. This is the first president perhaps who's said it so loudly. This is basically the Nixon tapes as if they were played live on television every day, or on Twitter.' How should reporters respond when the president goads them? Pace: 'Every time, we make it about us, every time one of us becomes the face of the fight, I think we fail-because we lose the whole point of what we're doing.'

"Could it lead to actual violence, like the shooting that put Steve Scalise and others in the hospital? Baker: 'There's no reason to think that it couldn't happen, just like it

happened on that baseball field. And that was by a liberal who was upset at Republicans. It could happen the exact opposite way, and it could happen with reporters as well." <http://politi.co/2uxzLp4> ... **Listen to the full podcast** <http://apple.co/2e2dLvm>

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MEDIAWATCH - "Fox suspends business news host Charles Payne amid sexual harassment allegations," by LA Times' Stephen Battaglio: "Payne's suspension was announced by Fox Business Network following his program 'Making Money,' and shortly after the Los Angeles Times first reported the investigation. ... Payne, who hosts 'Making Money' on the network and appears on various other programs, has acknowledged what he described as a three-year 'romantic relationship' with a married female political analyst who frequently appeared on Fox Business Network and Fox News Channel from 2013 to 2016. Payne admitted to the extramarital affair in a statement to the National Enquirer published Wednesday that included an apology to his wife, children and friends." <http://lat.ms/2txn6m8>

--"Conservative Analyst Scottie Nell Hughes Accuses Fox Business Host of Sexual Harassment," by Yashar Ali in HuffPost: "Hughes has told several sources that she feels that Payne, the network and Bill Shine ??? then co-president of Fox News and Fox Business ??? retaliated against her after they learned of the relationship, which would be the basis for her sexual harassment claim." <http://bit.ly/2toqnFU>

--"NBC's Richard Engel steps out with themed series," by AP's David Bauder: "Foreign correspondent Richard Engel is borrowing Rachel Maddow's MSNBC time slot on Friday nights over the next month for 'On Assignment,' a series that sets aside cable news chatter for deeply reported stories about world affairs. The first edition this week focuses on Vladimir Putin's Russia, using the news hook of Putin's meeting Friday with President Donald Trump." <http://bit.ly/2tPrRdf> ... **Preview** <http://on.msnbc.com/2uwxavO>

Playbookers

ENGAGED! -- Michael Ambrosini, the director of the White House chief of staff's office, proposed to **Vanessa Morrone**, adviser to the White House press secretary. Michael flew Vanessa's family to her childhood home in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and proposed in front of them with a Tony Bennett song playing in the background. A Bennett concert was their first date three summers ago. They then celebrated at Vanessa's favorite restaurant in Milwaukee. The couple first met through Reince Priebus a few summers ago while he was briefly back home visiting Kenosha. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2sQF5lm>

OUT AND ABOUT -- National Geographic had a shark-tagging trip in Cape Cod with NBC's Jenna Bush Hager. She and her crew rode the boat with National Geographic shark expert Brian Skerry and Greg Skomal. They also tagged a shark off of Cape Cod and named it "Jenna." **SPOTTED** at the afternoon party reception at the Wequassett Resort and Golf Club: Laura Nichols, Molly Mulrain, Brad Roberts, Chris Albert, Michael and Meghan Meehan.

TRANSITIONS: Phillip Mena, former correspondent for ABC News, is joining NBC News and MSNBC where he will co-anchor "Early Today" with Frances Rivera and be a fill-in host on weekends for MSNBC. ... **Michael Burns** starts on Monday, July 17 as Rep. Nita Lowey's (D-N.Y.) communications director. He was previously with Rep. Donald Payne, Jr.'s (D-N.J.) office.

OUT AND ABOUT -- British Ambassador Sir Kim Darroch hosted a farewell reception for the embassy's political counsellor Susannah Goshko and head of communications Michael Hoare at the Ambassador's Residence on Thursday evening. Both are returning to London at the end of the summer. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2tPvwHQ> **SPOTTED:** Anne Gearan, Peter Cook, Margie Omero, Ben Chang, Phil Rucker, Robert Costa, Maggie Dougherty, Marty Obst, Josh Pitcock, Scott Milburn, Sergio Gor, Missy Owen.

SUNDAY SO FAR -- "Fox News Sunday": Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.). Panel: Brit Hume, Donna Edwards, Newt Gingrich, Juan Williams

--**NBC's "Meet the Press":** Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... DNC Chair Tom Perez and RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel. Panel: Ruth Marcus, Kristen Welker, Rich Lowry, Robert Costa

- **CBS' "Face the Nation":** Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) ... former Dallas Police Chief David Brown ... Panel: Margaret Brennan, David Ignatius, Michael Crowley and David Nakamura ... Victor Cha

--**ABC's "This Week":** Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin ... Walter Shaub. Panel: Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), Jason Riley, Katrina vanden Heuvel

--**CNN's "State of the Union,"** guest-anchored by Dana Bash: Ash Carter. Panel: Jen Psaki, former Sen. Rick Santorum, Nina Turner, Rep. Scott Taylor (R-Va.)

--**CNN's "Inside Politics,"** hosted by John King: Michael Shear, Karoun Demirjian, Mary Katharine Ham, Jeff Zeleny

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS":** Elliott Abrams, Anne Applebaum, Ian Bremmer, Anne-Marie Slaughter ... Sergey Karaganov ... David Rubenstein

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Nia-Malika Henderson, CNN senior political reporter. How

she's celebrating: "I will spend my birthday in London with my girlfriend. We plan on shopping, eating and checking out touristy places like Buckingham Palace and the Wimbledon scene." Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2uRuvfv>

BIRTHDAYS: Michelle Kwan ... Dick Armey is 77 ... CAP's Rachel Rosen ... author David McCullough is 84 ... Luther Lowe, Yelp's VP of public policy, who recently played a starring role in a big NYT Sunday Business NYT cover story on Yelp's battle with Google <http://nyti.ms/2stdBmy> ... Bill Lord ... Jason Raymond ... Rep. Judy Chu is 64 (D-Calif.) ... Madelyn Beck, reporter for Inside Energy (hat tip: Amy Sisk) ... Rachael Leman, executive director of CARE Action ... Amanda Maddox, comms director for Sen. Johnny Isakson ... Susan Pelter ... Julie Xie ... Terry Camp ... Eleanor Clift ... Nikki Harris ... Politico alum Molly Jay ... Robin Doody is 25 (h/t sister Clare) ... Ed Kaleta, VP of federal gov't relations and head of Walgreens DC office ... Mike Rigas, chief of staff at the Mass. Dept. of Veterans Affairs and President Trump's nominee to be deputy director of OPM (h/t Ed Cash) ...

... **Andy Manatos**, president of Manatos & Manatos ... Israeli business mogul Yitzhak Tshuva is 69 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Nicole Eynard, DCCC deputy executive director and a McCaskill and Specter alum (h/t Ian Russell) ... Amanda Crumley, former Vilsack, Warner and WH alum (h/t Jon Haber) ... Marti Adams Baker of the Brunswick Group and a De Blasio alum ... Melisse Morris, VP at BlackRock ... Roselle Chartock ... Randy James, senior manager at Sugerman Communications in L.A. ... Kathy Roeder ... Felix Thomas Morgan ... Larry Van Dyne is 72 ... Michael Hudome ... Larry Irving ... Maria H. Keech LeGrand ... Justin Crockett Elzie ... Travis Rundlet ... Jim Bell of TTR Sotheby's ... Blake Vilmain ... Dan Hunter ... Craig Trost ... Patrick Dillon ... Luke Bauer ... Linda Olsen (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Ringo Starr is 77 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from Postmates:** With its fleet of Postmates earning taxable incomes, the capital generated through the mobile application is being reinvested in the economy to do everything from pay down debt, to start a small business, or even enroll in college classes. As On Demand platforms shape the future of work, Postmates applauds legislation aimed at experimenting with portable benefits models, and calls for new federal and local skill-based investments to account for the impact of automation on the workforce. <https://postmates.com> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Tue 11/14/2017 12:58:01 PM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: MOORE DEFIES GOP CALLS TO STEP DOWN – Sessions testifies before House Judiciary – MENENDEZ JURY DEADLOCKED – Rand Paul returns

By Heather Caygle | 11/14/2017 07:56 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

With an assist from Elana Schor and Seung Min Kim

WHAT'S NEXT IN THE MOORE SAGA? Roy Moore is showing no signs he plans to withdraw from the Alabama Senate race, despite calls from GOP leaders to do so and a fifth woman accusing him of misconduct, claiming he sexually assaulted her when she was a teenager. "I think he should step aside," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Monday, adding: "I believe the women, yes." With Moore refusing to drop out, Republicans are exploring their limited options to boot him other ways.

Option 1: Write-in campaign - Sen. Luther Strange said it's "highly unlikely" he pursues a write-in bid before the Dec. 12 election but Republicans are considering asking Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has been on the outs with the president, to run for his old seat. McConnell discussed the idea via phone with Vice President Mike Pence on Monday, Jonathan Martin and Sheryl Gay Stolberg report for the New York Times. "The swap would be something of a win-win for Mr. McConnell and Mr. Trump - the senator is eager to rid himself of Mr. Moore and the president has been open about his disappointment with Mr. Sessions."

Option 2: Expulsion - Republicans are divided over whether to try and expel Moore from the Senate if he does win the election. Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.), chairman of the Senate GOP's campaign arm, first raised the idea Monday. But other Republicans worry such drastic action could raise serious questions about the Senate defying the will of voters, Seung Min and Bres report. The Senate Ethics Committee would take the lead in expulsion proceedings and 67 senators would need to vote in favor for it to succeed. If Moore is elected, "what will happen then, none of us know," Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby said.

Related: "The Republican National Committee hasn't yet dumped Roy Moore," Henry J. Gomez reports for BuzzFeed.

SESSIONS ON THE HILL TODAY - Attorney General Jeff Sessions will testify before the House Judiciary Committee today in what's expected to be a tense hearing on everything from the Trump campaign's contact with Russia to news that DOJ is considering appointing a new special counsel to investigate the Clinton Foundation and an Obama-era uranium deal. Sessions has repeatedly denied he knew of any contact between the Trump campaign and Russia. But two campaign aides have since told federal and congressional investigators that Sessions was in the room or informed about potential dealings with the Kremlin. Kyle with more: <http://politi.co/2AIClcf>. **Tune in starting at 10 a.m.:** <http://bit.ly/2AJ57MI>

CHC FEUD THREATENS DREAMER MOMENTUM - A clash between Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) and Latino Democratic lawmakers over his attempt to join the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has gotten so nasty that it's threatening to derail momentum for a year-end deal to save Dreamers. Some CHC members are miffed Curbelo won't sign onto their signature bill, the Dream Act, and have even accused him of discouraging other Republicans from backing the proposal. Democratic lawmakers are also smarting after Curbelo got into a fight with CHC Chair Michelle Lujan Grisham behind closed doors, accusing the group of discriminating against him and seeming to take a jab at her inability to speak Spanish.

Curbelo formally submitted a request to join the CHC on Monday and the caucus could vote as soon as Thursday. But members say it's unclear how the vote will go given everything that's happened in recent weeks. "Don't give people reason to leave your bench," said one source. "Now you're making the caucus make a decision between you, an outlier, and someone who is thought of very highly." Your Huddle host with more: <http://politi.co/2AI1ZR2>

GUYS, IT'S TUESDAY. WE'RE DOING THIS. Welcome to Nov. 14, and thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill.

MONDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Emma Dumain's [story about five senators to watch](#) on the tax bill got the win to start off the week.

HOUSE HARASSMENT HEARING TODAY - The House Administration Committee will hold a hearing on sexual harassment today as lawmakers look at ways to update the chamber's training and reporting policies. Ahead of the hearing, [more than 1,500 former Hill staffers](#) signed a letter calling on Congress to mandate sexual harassment training and overhaul the process for reporting complaints. Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), who has said she was sexually harassed as a Hill staffer, and Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.), a former employment attorney, will testify during the first part of the hearing, which begins at 10 a.m. Tune in: <http://bit.ly/2mqs2JC>

Across the Capitol, senators in both parties are touting their move last week to mandate sexual harassment training in the upper chamber. But the Senate did nothing to address the system for filing complaints, one many critics say is burdensome and deters victims from coming forward. Now Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) is working with Speier to release a plan that would streamline the reporting system, which currently requires victims to undergo mediation and counseling before they can file a formal complaint, Elana reports. "No one reform is going to change everything," Gillibrand said, "but we have to at least keep trying." More: <http://politi.co/2AIgJ2j>

Related: CNN reports on the unwritten rules female Hill staffers follow to avoid getting harassed, including a "creep list," described as "an informal roster passed along by word-of-mouth, consisting of the male members most notorious for inappropriate behavior." According to the report, "more than half a dozen interviewees independently named one California congressman for pursuing female staffers; another half dozen pointed to a Texas congressman for engaging in inappropriate behavior. CNN is not naming either of those lawmakers because the stories are unverified." MJ Lee, Sunlen Serfaty, Sara Ganim and Juana Summers with more: <http://cnn.it/2AHwtTp>

MENENDEZ JURY: TRY, TRY AGAIN - Jurors in Sen. Bob Menendez's federal corruption trial will resume deliberations today after telling the judge they were deadlocked on Monday. "Go home, get a breath of fresh air or rain, or whatever it may be doing out there," U.S. District Judge William H. Walls said. The jury had already been instructed to start deliberations anew on Monday after an alternate was tapped to replace a juror who was dismissed last week to go on a pre-planned vacation. That juror, leaving the courthouse in Newark last week, said she thought Menendez was innocent and the jury likely wouldn't reach a verdict. Nicholas Pugliese with the N.J. Record: <https://usat.ly/2AJTqp6>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS - President Trump returns to Washington today after nearly two weeks in Asia. Trump will be on Capitol Hill Thursday to speak to House Republicans ahead of their big tax reform vote, Nancy Cook and Nolan McCaskill report. "Leadership believes, is very confident, that we will have, we do and will have, the votes for passage," House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady told reporters Monday. The Senate Finance Committee kicked off its multi-day markup Monday afternoon but the real work starts today when Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) unveils changes intended to make the bill comply with the Senate's strict budgetary rules.

Meanwhile, Democrats are "going on offense" to toxify the legislation, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) declared Monday. At an appearance alongside House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Schumer told reporters that the GOP tax plan "will be at the center of our efforts to take back the House and Senate in 2018."

RAND RETURNS - Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) returned to Washington Monday, nursing six broken ribs and doing little to quiet speculation about what prompted an alleged attack by his next-door neighbor more than a week ago. "An aide attempted to deflect reporters as Paul quietly explained that he's still struggling to breathe as his ribs heal," Ed O'Keefe and Paul Kane report for the Washington Post.

Paul told the Washington Examiner that there was "no justification" for the alleged attack. "I'm not really too concerned about what someone's motive is. I'm just concerned that I was attacked from the back and somebody broke six of my ribs and gave me a damaged lung where at least for now I have trouble speaking and breathing and now I've hurt for 10 days," he said. Paul Bedard with more: <http://washex.am/2AIHHa0>

ANYTHING ELSE WORTH MENTIONING? Brett Talley, already a controversial judicial nominee for having never tried a case, has angered Democrats by failing to disclose in his Senate questionnaire that his wife is a top White House lawyer, the New York Times reports. But Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) said Democrats should've known and asked about that during Talley's confirmation hearing. "That wife was in the audience when he had a hearing. How come that didn't come up at that particular time?" Grassley told reporters Monday. "The wife was employed at that time she was in the very room where that question should've been asked and why wasn't that question asked by members that are concerned about it?" Talley's district court nomination was approved by the committee on a party-line vote but has yet to be considered by the full Senate.

GREEN TO RETIRE IN 2018 - Longtime Texas Democratic Rep. Gene Green won't seek reelection next year after serving more than two decades in Congress. Green's district, which is more than three-quarters Hispanic, is overwhelmingly Democratic. Green won his last election with more than 70 percent of the vote. More: <http://politi.co/2AH59Vr>

TODAY IN CONGRESS - **The House** meets at 10 a.m. with first votes around 1 p.m. and last votes around 5 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2AH7VKl>. **The Senate** meets at 10 a.m. to resume consideration of DOT general counsel nominee Steven Bradbury. The chamber will recess for weekly caucus lunches from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.

AROUND THE HILL - **House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Reps. Suzan DelBene, (D-Wash.), Judy Chu (D-Calif.), Lois Frankel (D-Fla.) and Terri Sewell (D-Ala.)** hold a press conference with MomsRising at 10 a.m. on the GOP tax bill in 234 Cannon.

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), GOP Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.) hold a press conference at 10 a.m. in HC-8.

House Democratic Caucus Chair Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) and Vice Chair Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) take questions from reporters after Democrats' weekly caucus meeting starting at 10:15 a.m. in HVC Studio A.

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) holds his weekly pen and pad at 11 a.m. in H-144. **More than a dozen Senate and House Democrats** hold a press conference on climate change at 11:30 a.m. in the Senate swamp.

MONDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Cory Bisbee was first to guess that former Rep. Royal Hurlburt Weller (D-N.Y.) was born on July 2, 1881, the same day President James Garfield was shot. Garfield died eleven weeks later on Sept. 19 as a result of an infection from the gunshot wound.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Cory with today's question: Before redistricting in the wake of the 2010 census, Rep. Jim McGovern represented the 3rd congressional district of Massachusetts, a seat once held by this man. The man in question later lost an election following redistricting by his own party. Name the politician, what office he lost re-election to, and what office he subsequently held. The first person to answer correctly gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: hcaygle@politico.com.

TONIGHT - SEVENTH ANNUAL EMERGING HEALTH CARE LEADERS EVENT - an evening of one-on-one conversations with the rising stars who are moving the health care system forward through improvements in payment, delivery and quality of care. *Speakers include:* Anna Abram, FDA; Adam Buckalew, House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health; Matt Gallivan, Office of Senator Bill Cassidy; Arielle Woronoff, Senate Committee on Finance. **TONIGHT - 5:30 p.m. -- AJAX - 1011 4th St NW. RSVP: [here](#) Livestream: [here](#).**

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<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2017/11/14/moore-defies-gop-calls-to-step-down-sessions-testifies-before-house-judiciary-menendez-jury-deadlocked-rand-paul-returns-223333>

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--NBC's **"Meet the Press"**: Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) ... Cambridge Analytica co-founder Christopher Wylie. Panel: Cook Political Report editor Charlie Cook, The New York Times' Helene Cooper, presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin and National Review editor Rich Lowry.

--ABC's **"This Week"**: White House Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Thomas Bossert ... Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.). Panel: ABC News' Mary Bruce, ABC News' Cokie Roberts, NPR/WAMU host Joshua Johnson and McClatchy's Franco Ordoñez.

--CBS's **"Face the Nation"**: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin ... Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA) ... Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) ... WIRED Magazine editor in chief Nicholas Thompson. Panel: The Atlantic editor in chief Jeffrey Goldberg, Bloomberg News' Toluse Olorunnipa, AP's Julie Pace and National Review's Ramesh Ponnuru.

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: White House National Economic Council director Larry Kudlow ... Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.). Panel: Former Bush White House senior adviser Karl Rove, former Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD), Heritage Action for America CEO Michael Needham and Fox News political analyst Juan Williams. "Power Player of the Week" segment with former HHS Secretary and American University president Sylvia Burwell.

--Fox News' **"Sunday Morning Futures"** (10am – 12pm ET): Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) ... Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) ... author Gordon Chang ("The Coming Collapse of China") ... Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX). Panel: Former Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and The Wall Street Journal's Mary Kissel.

--Fox News' **"MediaBuzz"** (11am ET / 10am CT): The Washington Examiner's Sarah Westwood ... The Federalist's Mollie Hemingway ... former Ohio Senate Minority Leader and American University's Capri Cafaro ... pollster Frank Luntz ... technology analyst Shana Glenzer ... The Washington Examiner's Emily Jashinsky ... radio host Bill Press.

--CNN's **"Inside Politics"** with John King (SUN 8am ET): Panel: Politico's Eliana Johnson, CNN's Manu Raju, TIME Magazine's Molly Ball and The Washington Post's Josh Dawsey.

--CNN's **"State of the Union"** (9am ET / 12pm ET): White House National Economic Council director Larry Kudlow ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME). Panel: MoveOn.org senior advisor Karine Jean-Pierre, former Obama White House Communications Director Jennifer Psaki, Center for Equal Opportunity chair Linda Chavez and U.S. Senate candidate Dr. Kelli Ward (R-AZ).

--CNN's **"Fareed Zakaria GPS"** (SUN 10am, 1pm ET): Former Obama White House National Economic Council director Larry Summers ... former Obama White House National Security Advisor Tom Donilon ... former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Princeton University's Adm. Mike Mullen (Ret.) ... author and foreign correspondent Rania Abouzeid ("No Turning Back: Life, Loss, and Hope in Wartime Syria").

--CNN's **"Reliable Sources"**: (SUN 11am ET): The New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet. Panel: The New York Magazine's Olivia Nuzzi, political analyst Jeff Greenfield and radio host and The Resurgent founder Erick Erickson ... former Sinclair reporter Jonathan Beaton.

--Univision's **"Al Punto"** (SUN 10am ET / 10am PT): Former Mexican President Vicente Fox ... Mexican presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador ... wife of Venezuelan rebel helicopter pilot (Óscar Pérez) Danahis Vivas and the mother of the pilot Aminta Pérez ... deported U.S. Army veteran Hector Barajas ... New York City Schools chancellor Richard Carranza ... actor and filmmaker Eugenio Derbez.

--C-SPAN: **"The Communicators"** (SAT 6pm ET): Interviews from the "State of the Net" conference with Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Cybersecurity and Communications Jeanette Manfra ... CenturyLink national security & emergency preparedness director Kathryn Condello ... Zello CEO Bill Moore ... Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cyber & International Communications Policy Robert Strayer ... Freedom House Freedom on the Net director Sanja Kelly ... **"Newsmakers"** (SUN 10am ET): FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb, questioned by Bloomberg News' Anna Edney and Kaiser Health News' Sarah Jane Tribble ... **"Q&A"** (SUN 8pm & 11pm ET): Author and theoretical physicist Michio Kaku ("The Future of Humanity: Terraforming Mars, Interstellar Travel, Immortality, and Our Destiny Beyond Earth").

--**MSNBC's "Kasie DC"** (SUN 7pm ET): Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) ... Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) ... congressional candidate Lt. Col. Amy McGrath (Ret.) (D-KY) ... former RNC chairman Michael Steele ... MSNBC anchor Nicolle Wallace ... BBC News' Katty Kay ... Voto Latino's Maria Teresa Kumar ... USA Today's Susan Page ... The New York Times' Elisabeth Bumiller ... AP's Jonathan Lemire ... Axios' Sara Fischer ... NBC News' Jo Ling Kent ... CNBC's Kayla Tausche.

--**PBS' "To the Contrary"**: Heritage Foundation president Kay James.

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at MackOnPolitics.com: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 9/8/2017 5:12:47 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise: HOUSE passes debt ceiling/hurricane aid/government funding deal -- TRUMP: 'Sorry, Republicans' -- JOE BIDEN'S daughter says she hopes he runs in 2020

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise

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MUST-READ STORY -- BLOOMBERG BNA'S JONATHAN NICHOLSON: "Spring 2018 likely for next debt vote but election season possible": "The good news for lawmakers: Under the Harvey aid package that passed the Senate Sept. 7, they won't have to vote on the debt limit again until 2018-with early estimates that the next debt vote will be in the spring.

"The bad news for lawmakers : There's an outside chance a vote will take place a few months ahead of the midterm elections. ... While the legislation temporarily suspends the debt limit through Dec. 8 -- resetting it at a higher level Dec. 9 to include debt issued while the debt limit was not in effect -- allows Treasury to reset its 'extraordinary measures' that give it some extra borrowing capacity, and thus extra time, once it nears the debt limit. The actual amount of time granted by the extraordinary measures will depend on various factors, including Treasury's borrowing patterns, incoming receipts and the government's rate at which it burns through cash.

"There is a small but real chance that extraordinary measures might meet the Treasury's needs through the April 15 tax date. If that happens, the debt ceiling debate could stretch all the way to August or even September,' Lou Crandall, chief economist with analytical firm Wrightson ICAP, told Bloomberg BNA." <http://bit.ly/2eLxRKY>

Good Friday afternoon.

THE NEW ALLIANCE, CEMENTED -- THE HOUSE PASSED the debt ceiling/government funding/hurricane Harvey relief deal 316-90. All 90 of the no votes came from the Republican party.

-- BEHIND THE SCENES, REPUBLICANS FUME -- Rachael Bade and Kyle Cheney: "It was supposed to be a call to unity. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney joined a closed-door GOP conference meeting Friday to try to rally wary Republicans around a debt ceiling bill they hated.

"But the huddle quickly went off the rails when Rep. Tim Walberg stood up to say President Donald Trump needed to play more with the team. The Michigan Republican said he was all for bipartisanship. But he argued that Trump shouldn't have blindsided the conference the way he did when he struck a deal with Democratic leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, undercutting GOP leaders. And the room booed when Mulvaney and Mnuchin refused to commit to spending cuts during the next debt ceiling debate - and then asked for their vote on the current legislation." <http://politi.co/2gPtAH1>

'REPUBLICANS, SORRY' -- FROM THE WHITE HOUSE -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:34 a.m.: "Hurricane Irma is of epic proportion, perhaps bigger than we have ever seen. Be safe and get out of its way, if possible. Federal G is ready!" ... **at 8:37 a.m.:** "Our incredible U.S. Coast Guard saved more than 15,000 lives last week with Harvey. Irma could be even tougher. We love our Coast Guard!" ... **at 8:41 a.m.:** "Republicans, sorry, but I've been hearing about Repeal & Replace for 7 years, didn't happen! Even worse, the Senate Filibuster Rule will...." ... **at 8:46 a.m.:** "...never allow the Republicans to pass even great legislation. 8 Dems control - will rarely get 60 (vs. 51) votes. It is a Repub Death Wish!" ... **at 8:57 a.m.:** "Republicans must start the Tax Reform/Tax Cut legislation ASAP. Don't wait until the end of September. Needed now more than ever. Hurry!"

-- HOLD YOUR HORSES, MR. PRESIDENT. There are roughly 45 legislative days until the end of the year. A chunk of December will be eaten up by another government-funding and debt-ceiling fight that you just set up. Congress hasn't passed a budget. That's a multi-week affair, at best. ... **AND BY THE WAY:** There is no appetite to change the Senate's rules.

WHAT KEVIN MCCARTHY IS READING -- "SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - Federal audit says \$84 million in U.S. taxpayer funds were used improperly for planning California water tunnel project."

WEATHER GURU STEVE SHEPARD SPEAKS! -- Irma has weakened slightly in the past 24 hours and now has maximum sustained winds of 150 mph. That's roughly the intensity at which the National Hurricane Center expects the storm to make landfall late Saturday or early Sunday. To put that in perspective, that's about on par with Hurricane Andrew's intensity upon landfall near Homestead in 1992, and 20 mph stronger than Hurricane Harvey when it came ashore in Texas last month.

The latest forecast (<http://bit.ly/2gPPrSi>) at 11 a.m. jogged ever-so-slightly westward - but regardless of whether the ultimate track of Irma runs up I-95, I-75 or somewhere in between, Irma is going to spread extreme winds, deadly storm surge, flooding rains and tornadoes over much of the Florida peninsula. The strongest winds will be over South Florida - especially overnight Saturday into Sunday -- but even parts of North Florida could see hurricane-force winds Sunday night and Monday as Irma heads north. Tropical-storm conditions will begin over South Florida tomorrow, so today is the final day for residents to finish their preparations to protect life and property.

-- **"Jeb Bush praises Trump's leadership handling hurricanes,"** by CNN's Ashley Killough: "Jeb Bush offered some rare praise Friday for President Donald Trump and the way he's handling two back-to-back hurricanes. 'President Trump has done a good job keeping, showing his concern for the victims of Harvey and I'm sure he'll do the same (for Irma),' the former two-term Florida governor said on CNN's 'New Day.' 'The key, though, is to make sure Washington's here for the long haul, for the long-term recovery of our state.' The intense hurricane season is all too familiar for Bush, who dealt with the catastrophic storm seasons of 2004 and 2005, in which eight hurricanes and four tropical storms slammed into Florida." <http://cnn.it/2gPhFcm>

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** How are Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers helping create the future in science, medicine and national security? Learn more: hpe.com/supercomputing *****

REMEMBER THE ELECTION INTEGRITY COMMISSION? -- "Election Integrity Commission members accuse New Hampshire voters of fraud," by WaPo's Dave Weigel: "Days before they meet in New Hampshire, members of the White House's Election Integrity Commission have seized on a report about same-day registration to allege that massive fraud might have swung the state's 2016 vote. Both voters and election experts say the allegation -- accusing thousands of voters of criminal activity simply for living in New Hampshire but holding out-of-state driver's licenses -- are baseless.

"The accusation arose Thursday morning, when Shawn Jasper, the speaker of New Hampshire's Republican-run House of Representatives, released data on same-day registrants that he'd obtained from the secretary of state's office. In November 2016, 6,540 voters had registered to vote on Election Day. As of Aug. 30, just 1,014 of those voters had obtained a New Hampshire drivers license. A few hundred voters did not obtain state licenses but had registered cars in the state. That was enough for Jasper to allege thousands of fraudulent votes - and for Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, the vice chairman of the commission, to flatly allege that fraudulent voters might have stolen the state's four electoral votes and a U.S. Senate seat away from Republicans. ...

"Kobach apparently made no attempt to contact voters who'd cast ballots but held out-of-state IDs. Thursday night, The Washington Post asked voters who'd done so to tell their stories; three did so within 60 minutes -- college students, who were living in New Hampshire but did not change their licenses." <http://wapo.st/2xidyAb> ... **Kobach's evidence free column in Breitbart** <http://bit.ly/2xie9Sr>

TRUMP INC. -- @juliannagoldman: "Mar-a-Lago, @TrumpJupiter, @TrumpPalmBeach are CLOSED ahead of #HurricaneIrma. @TrumpDoral waiving cancellation fees, per Trump Org spox".

AFTERNOON READ -- "Why North Korea is a black hole for American spies," by Jacqueline Klimas: "[B]ecause the so called Hermit Kingdom has long been one of the most impenetrable intelligence targets -- the top U.S. spy earlier this year called it 'one

of the hardest, if not the hardest' -- there is low confidence airstrikes or other means of attack would successfully thwart its nuclear and missile ambitions without leaving significant elements of its arsenal for Pyongyang to retaliate with. 'You don't want to stir the hornet's nest and the hornets are still there when you're done,' said Douglas Paal, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former National Security Council staffer for former President George H.W. Bush. 'If you're giving options to the president ... one of the very first things we have to say is we can strike what we can see, but we don't know what we can't see.'"

<http://politi.co/2xhNcyh>

MORE FROM BANNON'S INTERVIEW -- "Steve Bannon: Trump's leaked 'Access Hollywood' tape was a 'litmus test,'" from CBS: "[Steve] Bannon, then RNC chairman Reince Priebus and Gov. Chris Christie discussed what steps to take next. In his conversation with Charlie Rose, the executive chairman of conservative publication Breitbart News explains how the meeting ended up costing Christie a potential job in the administration. ... Bannon: 'I gotta -- you know, I'm Irish. I gotta get my black book and I got 'em. ... Christie, because of Billy Bush weekend -- and -- was -- was -- not looked at for a Cabinet position. ... I told him, 'The plane leaves at 11 o'clock in the morning. If you're on the plane, you're on the team.' Didn't make the plane.'"

<http://cbsn.ws/2gNVT8y>

2020 WATCH -- "Will Joe Biden Run in 2020? His Designer Daughter Ashley Sure Hopes So," by WWD's Rosemary Feitelberg: "As for whether Joe Biden will run for president in 2020, his daughter [Ashley Biden], who still works full-time in Philadelphia, said, 'I hope so. He's busier truly than ever. Right now his focus is on the [Biden] Foundation and Cancer Moonshot, as well as getting other Democrats elected. He's not there. He's taking it day by day after the loss of my dear beloved brother [Beau who died in 2015]...He'll make a decision when that time comes,' she said. 'It's a little ways away. A lot can happen in four years and we know this as a family. If he is in good health, knock on wood, and seeing what the landscape is at the time, yeah, I think he is considering it.'" <http://bit.ly/2welg8c>

2018 WATCH -- "Virginia Senate race: Carly Fiorina rules out run, Jim Gilmore 'considering' candidacy," by CNN's Andrew Kaczynski: "Former Hewlett-Packard executive Carly Fiorina said Friday that she would not seek the Republican nomination for US Senate in Virginia's 2018 election. 'I have made a decision,' Fiorina said on the John Fredericks Show. 'I have decided that I can be of more value outside the system than a single voice among a hundred inside the system.' ... Fredericks speculated on air that former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore might jump in the race. When reached by CNN on Friday, Gilmore said he was 'considering' the possibility of his candidacy."

<http://cnn.it/2xiaKCV>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Rubio talks about the hurricane -- Progressive Democrats consider a challenge to Feinstein <http://politi.co/2gOKdCP>

HURRICANE AFTER EFFECTS -- "Homeland Security Cancels Massive Roundups

of Undocumented Immigrants," by NBC News' Julia Ainsley and Andrew Blankstein: "President Donald Trump's Department of Homeland Security had planned nationwide raids to target 8,400 undocumented immigrants later this month, according to three law enforcement officials and an internal document that described the plan as 'the largest operation of its kind in the history of ICE' ... But after NBC News reported the plans late Thursday, the agency issued a statement saying it had cancelled nationwide enforcement actions due to Hurricane Irma and the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey." <http://nbcnews.to/2gOXkDU>

VALLEY WATCH -- "Here's what to expect from Apple's big event next week," by WIRED's David Pierce <http://bit.ly/2gOhloN>

HOT JOB -- NYT is hiring an artificial intelligence/FutureTech investigative reporter: "Investigate how algorithms, artificial intelligence, robots and technology are influencing our lives, our businesses, our privacy and the future." <http://bit.ly/2gOXye3>

OUT AND ABOUT -- The NFL, Entertainment Software Association and Electronic Arts hosted a kickoff party last night for the launch of Madden 2018. **SPOTTED:** House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Reps. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn), Chris Collins (R-N.Y.), Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Rick Larsen (D-Wash.), John Shimkus (R-Ill.), Matthew Gaetz (R-Fla.), Charlie Dent (R-Pa.), Mimi Walters (R-Calif.), Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), Mark Sanford (R-S.C.).

SPOTTED: Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-N.C.) and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) separately at DCA.

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FORMER MILITARY LEADERS OPPOSE HASPEL -- Barragán, Comstock make Playbook Power List

04/23/2018 07:59 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

CMR UNDER SIEGE IN BOTH WASHINGTONS -- House Republican Conference Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), the only woman in House GOP leadership, could lose her seat in a Democratic wave this year. And "several fellow GOP members are pining for her job, questioning her effectiveness as chairwoman of the conference and weighing whether to challenge her," Rachael reports. "But assuming she survives her own reelection, Republicans will be hard-pressed to push McMorris Rodgers out of her post in leadership heading the conference's communications strategy. She still enjoys support from many Republicans and, more important, she's a prominent female figure in a conference dominated by men: Only 9 percent of House Republicans are [women]."

Rep. Mark Walker (R-N.C.) is seriously considering challenging McMorris Rodgers, while other lawmakers are hoping she steps down or seeks another post. "McMorris Rodgers said she's not going anywhere," Rachael writes. "And her allies say she's certainly not stepping down as conference chair anytime soon." Allies, in fact, say McMorris Rodgers could eye moving up in leadership and run for majority whip or majority leader. Many Republicans, however, say only a woman could replace McMorris Rodgers, as the optics of an all-white male GOP leadership team would be damaging. Much more: <https://politi.co/2K8NbzV>

MCCASKILL STANDS BY AS GOP IMPLODES, AGAIN -- Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) won a second term in 2012 when GOP Rep. Todd Akin's (R-Mo.) made his comments about "legitimate rape." If she wins a third term, she can thank Republican Gov. Eric Greitens, who is openly waging war against McCaskill's likely general election opponent, state Attorney General Josh Hawley. "Hawley demanded that Greitens resign and triggered a new investigation into the governor's fundraising, resulting in a second indictment last week," Daniel Strauss reports. "Greitens has fired back by seeking a restraining order against the attorney general, saying that Hawley's call for resignation meant he could not conduct an impartial investigation of the governor."

"The scandals are damaging the GOP at the most critical interval of its six-year wait to unseat McCaskill," he writes. "Democrats can hardly believe their good fortune at the same time they pounce." Democrats say Hawley's outrage rings hollow and are criticizing him for accepting a \$50,000 campaign donation from Greitens in 2016. The feud doesn't guarantee McCaskill will win in November, but it doesn't hurt to have another GOP implosion in an election year. More: <https://politi.co/2HCEOy7>

Related: "Hawley shakes up fundraising team amid GOP concerns," by Alex Isenstadt:

<https://politi.co/2HQKFNH>

FORMER RYAN DRIVER ENTERS RACE TO REPLACE HIM -- Bryan Steil, an attorney from Janesville, Wisconsin; a member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents; and a former driver for House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), is likely the GOP front-runner after announcing his campaign Sunday. Steil -- pronounced "style" -- "is well-known to GOP activists in Ryan's southeastern Wisconsin congressional district, but lacks a high public profile," The Associated Press' Scott Bauer reports. "That will change in the coming weeks, with money expected to pour in as Republicans look to keep the seat and to avoid a potentially embarrassing Democratic win." Other candidates include Republicans Jeremy Ryan, a prominent protester, and Paul Nehlen, and Democrats Randy "Iron Stache" Bryce and Janesville teacher Cathy Myers. More: <http://bit.ly/2HTVA9y>

GOOD MORNING! Thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill, on this Monday, April 23.

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CEO CONVERSATION -- Join POLITICO CEO Patrick Steel for a conversation with Steve Ballmer, former Microsoft CEO and founder of USAFacts, to talk data transparency, disruption in civic and business leadership, and the government's impact on society. [RSVP](#) for the CEO conversation -- 4/26 at the Newseum -- Doors open 11:30 a.m.

FRIDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Vice News' [report](#) on Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's (D-N.Y.) plan to introduce a bill to decriminalize marijuana was the winner.

WIN OR GO HOME -- Assistant Democratic Leader Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.) is calling for a leadership shakeup if the party fails to retake the House in November. "If we're still in the minority, all of us have got to go," Clyburn told POLITICO at his annual fish fry in Columbia. He was referring to himself, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.). "While an overhaul of Democratic House leadership is almost certain if the party falls short in the midterm elections, a re-ordering is possible even if Democrats win the majority," David Siders reports, noting that "a younger class of Democrats [is] clamoring to break into leadership." More: <https://politi.co/2qTlnr5>

Related reads: "S.C. Democrats running for Congress yearn for new party leadership to replace Pelosi," via The Post and Courier's Jamie Lovegrove: <http://bit.ly/2Jj190J>; "Fearing Chaos, National Democrats Plunge Into Midterm Primary Fights," by The New York Times' Alexander Burns: <https://nyti.ms/2vCfD9X>; and "Bernie Sanders Says 'Trump's Agenda Is Dead' if Democrats Win Midterms," from The New York Times' Elizabeth Dias and Shane Goldmacher: <https://nyti.ms/2HpKqbH>

108 RETIRED MILITARY LEADERS URGE SENATORS TO OPPOSE HASPEL -- Dozens of former military leaders will express their "profound concern" about Gina Haspel's nomination to lead the CIA in a letter to the Senate Intelligence Committee this morning. The

retired officials will call on senators to "examine closely the full extent" of Haspel's involvement in detention and interrogation programs, including her role in any torture or abuse of people in U.S. custody. "We are deeply troubled by the prospect of someone who appears to have been intimately involved in torture being elevated to one of the most important positions of leadership in the intelligence community," they write. Haspel is one of three controversial Cabinet and Cabinet-level nominees the narrowly divided Senate is working to confirm. The letter:

<https://politi.co/2Hps1vD>

Related: "CIA: Haspel 'acted appropriately' in destruction of torture tapes," by Elana: <https://politi.co/2F9eGp2>; and "How the C.I.A. Is Waging an Influence Campaign to Get Its Next Director Confirmed," from The New York Times' Adam Goldman and Matthew Rosenberg: <https://nyti.ms/2vBVMI2>

GOP SPLIT AS BANKS TAKE ON GUNS -- Republicans across the board are split over how to react as major banks cut off business with the gun industry. "Some Republicans ... have called on government agencies to cancel contracts with the banks and defer deregulation proposals that would benefit them. But other Republicans want to keep their hands off, saying lenders are free to decide who they do business with," Zachary Warmbrodt reports. "It's a conundrum that puts the free-market principles at odds with gun rights." Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.) isn't going to tell the private sector what to do. "It's dumb and it's dangerous waters," he said. Much more:

<https://politi.co/2HIkcV2>

Related read: "Gun control advocates push to make voter registration the legacy of Parkland shooting," from The Washington Post's Katie Zezima: <https://wapo.st/2qUogXJ>

CAPITOL HILL WOMEN MAKE POLITICO PLAYBOOK'S POWER LIST -- Reps. Nanette Barragán (D-Calif.) and Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) are among POLITICO Playbook's Power List of 18 women to watch in 2018. Barragán, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, won't even say the name "Trump" -- unless it's Melania. The freshman Democratic lawmaker represents a heavily Latino majority-minority district and backed an impeachment resolution late last year. "I'm here to be the face for the very community that this president is attacking," she told me in an interview.

Comstock is a vulnerable incumbent running for reelection in a district Hillary Clinton won in 2016. "Eight Democrats have already raised a combined \$1.2 million last quarter to take her on in November," Elena Schneider reports. "But Republicans believe that Comstock, a prodigious fundraiser and battle-tested incumbent, can weather a chaotic midterm cycle by relying on her brand." Other women to watch on the Hill include chiefs of staff Tessa Gould, Parker Poling and Monica Popp. The list: <https://politi.co/2HRFIUS>

THE CONGRESSMAN ALREADY RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT -- Rep. John Delaney (D-Md.) announced he was running for president six months into the Trump administration. He's since spent more than \$1 million on TV in Iowa, hired staffers and opened a campaign office in Des Moines. He's also made 110 campaign stops in 48 of the state's 99 counties and six trips to New Hampshire. "While higher-profile Democrats remain coy about their intentions, Delaney is unabashedly in," David Siders reports. "But in his massive investment of time and resources ...

he is testing the limits of a virtually unknown politician's ability to gain early-state traction by starting first and spending heavily." Much more: <https://politi.co/2F9jpal>

LESKO, TIPIRNENI FACE OFF TUESDAY IN AZ SPECIAL ELECTION -- Republican Debbie Lesko is favored to win Tuesday's Arizona special election to replace former Rep. Trent Franks, who resigned in December following sexual misconduct allegations. "But at a time when independents, and even some Republicans, nationally are increasingly wary of the GOP, Democrat Hiral Tipirneni has mounted a serious challenge to Lesko," The Arizona Republic's Ronald J. Hansen reports. "How close is the race? Recent polls show anything from Lesko winning by 10 percentage points to Tipirneni by 1." More: <http://bit.ly/2HLHv0p>

CORKER'S AWKWARD ENDORSEMENT -- After heaping praise on former Gov. Phil Bredesen last week, retiring Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) on Sunday said again that he won't campaign against the Democrat running for his seat. In an awkward exchange with Dana Bash on "State of the Union," Corker noted that he's "sent the maximum contribution to the Republican nominee on our side" and has said he plans "to vote for this person." Asked why Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), whose name Corker notably refused to say, is the better candidate to represent Tennessee, Corker acknowledged that, as a Republican representing a red state, Blackburn would support Mitch McConnell for majority leader.

Told that his response wasn't exactly a ringing endorsement, Corker laughed uncomfortably and reiterated that he's "supporting the nominee." "I have worked with the nominee for some time," he added. "And I don't know what else to say." More: <https://nym.ag/2F8LY7Y>

ROMNEY GETS A PRIMARY -- Mitt Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential candidate and presumptive successor to Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), narrowly lost to state Rep. Mike Kennedy, 49 percent to 51 percent, at Utah's state GOP convention over the weekend, forcing him into a June primary. "Romney ... is still heavily favored to win the seat," Alex Isenstadt reports. "Romney had already qualified for the June 26 primary ballot because he filed the needed number of signatures, the only candidate in the GOP field to have done so. But had he received 60 percent of the vote at the convention, he could have won the Republican nomination outright and avoided the two-month primary battle."

"The convention process draws the state's most ardent activists, and typically favors conservative candidates like Kennedy over more mainstream ones like Romney," he continues. "Success in the convention has not always translated into success in the primary, which draws a broader swath of the Republican electorate." Romney has a major fundraising advantage over Kennedy, with \$1.1 million cash on hand through the end of March compared to Kennedy's \$257,000. The winner is expected to face Democratic Salt Lake County councilwoman Jenny Wilson in the general election. More: <https://politi.co/2qSH0a9>

Related: "'I Was Trump Before Trump Was Trump,'" from The New York Times' Jeremy W. Peters: <https://nyti.ms/2qP79GS>

DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- **Jennifer Talhelm** has left the office of Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), where she served as communications director.

ENGAGED -- Daniel Schwarz, director of strategic comms for House Judiciary Committee Democrats and communications director for Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), proposed to **Jamie Geller**, senior adviser and comms director for Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) and alum of House Foreign Affairs. "There was a CoDel to Israel that Rep. [Eliot] Engel was leading. Jerry asked Eliot for his staffer's information and was able to get Jamie's cell phone number. The rest is history. The couple were engaged Thursday night and celebrated with family and friends over the weekend." *Pic* <http://bit.ly/2Hj9PUk>

WEEKEND WEDDING -- Ted Dooley, the executive director of the College Republican National Committee, and **Nicole Paciello**, deputy chief of staff to Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.), got married at Wequassett Resort and Golf Club in Chatham, Massachusetts. They met in College Republicans. *Pic* <http://bit.ly/2HRfGkF>

SPOTTED: Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.) and his wife Diana, Alex Smith, Gus Portela, Julia Hoy, Chandler Thornton, Massachusetts state Rep. Shawn Dooley, Eric Amidon, Clinton and Joanna Soffer, Ross Hemminger, Bryan Watkins, Megan Dutra, Kaitlyn Martin, Sinead Casey, Patrick Griffin, Alyssa Farah, Justin Griffin, Pat Griffin and Rob Oliver.

**** A message from the Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice:** The Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice urges Congress to support the FTC's update to the Contact Lens Rule and protect the rights of America's 41 million contacts wearers. Optometrists too often fail to provide prescriptions following eye exams, denying consumers the ability to shop around for their contact lenses. <https://keepcontactlenschoice.org> **

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- The Senate meets at 3 p.m. to resume consideration of judicial nominee Stuart Kyle Duncan. The chamber will hold a procedural vote on his nomination at 5:30 p.m. **The House** is out.

AROUND THE HILL -- Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) and others will hold a conference call briefing to discuss a Texas redistricting case to determine whether state House maps and congressional maps intentionally discriminated against Texas minority voters beginning at 3 p.m. The call-in number is 785-424-1667, and the password is TX REDISTRICT.

FRIDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- Tony Mazzaschi was first to correctly guess that former Sen. Howell Heflin is Alabama's former Supreme Court justice who received a Silver Star and two Purple Hearts after his service in the Marine Corps during World War II.

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- From Tony: Who replaced then-Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) in 2009 when he was nominated to be Commerce secretary? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: nmccaskill@politico.com.

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**** A message from the Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice:** Medical research shows no connection between eye health and where contact lenses are purchased. Yet,

optometrists and lens manufacturers continue to claim there are health risks from purchasing lenses online or from warehouse stores. These false claims conceal their true motivation - allowing optometrists to profit from selling more lenses and keeping prices high for manufacturers. www.KeepContactLensChoice.org **

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/04/23/mcmorris-rodgers-under-siege-former-ryan-driver-is-gop-front-runner-to-succeed-him-former-military-leaders-oppose-haspel-barragan-comstock-make-playbook-power-list-265456>

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03/29/2018 07:56 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

SPEAKER SCALISE? -- A group of House Republicans has privately encouraged Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), who nearly died when he was shot in the hip during a congressional baseball practice last summer, to embrace his star power and prepare a speakership bid. One lawmaker recently introduced to him donors as "the next speaker of the House." People close to Scalise say he'd be interested in the speakership if Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) retires and Republicans retain the House. But allies caution that he'd only run if Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) wouldn't run or fell short.

Scalise says he wouldn't rule it out. "Obviously, I've shown interest in the past at moving up," he tells Rachael in Louisiana. "I've enjoyed being in leadership." But now isn't the time to talk about it, he says, insisting that chatter about a Ryan retirement are "rumors" and that he's focused on the president's agenda and maintaining the House's GOP majority. "It's easy to get drawn into the palace intrigue and speculation," he says. "But if you do that, you truly will lose focus on what your mission is, and that is working with President Trump to advance a conservative agenda. The stakes are way too high for us to lose sight of what we need to do right now." More: <https://politi.co/2GhPw95>

Related: "Speaker Ryan exiting soon? 'Ludicrous' says predecessor Boehner," from The Washington Post's Paul Kane: <https://wapo.st/2E4YLaS>

TRUMP GIVES SENATE ANOTHER CONFIRMATION BATTLE -- The Senate can add Ronny Jackson's confirmation to its to-do list. With the president's dismissal of VA Secretary David Shulkin, the upper chamber will have to work to confirm Jackson, the White House doctor, in addition to secretary of state nominee Mike Pompeo and CIA director nominee Gina Haspel. Jackson "gave Trump a glowing physical and mental health assessment in a televised briefing in January," Joanne Kenen reports, "[b]ut he has never run anything approaching the sprawling Veterans Affairs bureaucracy or been caught in Washington's crossfire."

"Lawmakers on the Hill were full of praise for Shulkin and muted about Jackson, although many said they looked forward to meeting the president's pick," she writes. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) applauded Shulkin's service in a statement that simply added that he looks forward to meeting Jackson "and learning more about him." House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) lamented Shulkin's departure but acknowledged that Cabinet officials serve at the pleasure of the president and expressed a willingness to work with anyone who is "committed to doing the right thing on behalf of our nation's veterans."

"Democrats were more skeptical," Kenen notes. "Sen. Jon Tester, the top Democrat on the VA committee, praised Shulkin for serving 'honorably' and said he looked forward 'to meeting Admiral Jackson soon and seeing if he is up to the job.' Sen. Bernie Sanders, who also serves on the panel and chaired it in the past, was more blunt." "Our job is to strengthen the VA in order to provide high-quality care to our veterans, not dismember it," Sanders said in a statement. "The Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs should not approve any nominee for secretary who supports the privatization of the VA." More: <https://politi.co/2J0duYi>

Related reads: "VA Secretary Shulkin out after months of struggle," by Arthur Allen and Matthew Nussbaum: <https://politi.co/2GlnwS1>; "Veterans Affairs Secretary Is Latest to Go as Trump Shakes Up Cabinet," from The New York Times' Nicholas Fandos and Maggie Haberman: <https://nyti.ms/2GzWDxf>; "Trump taps his doctor to replace Shulkin at VA, choosing personal chemistry over traditional qualifications," via The Washington Post: <https://wapo.st/2GiPMZP>; and "Privatizing the V.A. Will Hurt Veterans," by David Shulkin: <https://nyti.ms/2GokLj6>

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WEDNESDAY'S MOST CLICKED: HuffPost's [report](#) on Rep. Jackie Speier's (D-Calif.) letter urging House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) to ensure that Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-Texas) repays an \$84,000 taxpayer funded sexual harassment settlement was the winner.

FOOD STAMP FIGHT COULD KILL FARM BILL -- A push from the Trump administration and House Republicans to crack down on food stamps could derail a massive farm bill that's heavily supported in Trump country. "Talks between House Democrats and Republicans on the farm bill broke down earlier this month over proposed work rules for the nutrition program that Democrats say would cut off an estimated 1 million participants -- a bad sign for the historically bipartisan legislation," Helena Bottemiller Evich and Catherine Boudreau report. "For conservatives, the bill offers a rare shot at reining in one of the government's biggest and most popular anti-poverty programs through stricter work and eligibility requirements."

"It's the first time in decades that a farm bill is being written with Republicans in control of Congress and the White House," they write. "Democrats, however, are refusing to consider 'extreme, partisan policies' that they say would slash spending on food stamps -- a bulwark of the social safety net for more than 50 years. The program currently helps more than 40 million low-income Americans buy groceries each month." The country's biggest retailers and food companies support the status quo, and farm groups are unlikely to back big changes to the program. "The standoff in the House Agriculture Committee ... is particularly striking because no legislative text has even been released." More: <https://politi.co/2GG2dhG>

CONGRESS CUTS BACK ON OIL PAINTINGS -- Yeah, lawmakers passed a massive \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending package last week and \$1.5 trillion tax cut late last year, but they found something to cut back on: oil paintings. "Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy's wish has come true, with President Donald Trump signing his Eliminating Government-Funded Oil-Painting -- or EGO -- Act into law on Wednesday," CNN's Daniella Diaz reports. "The cheekily named legislation prohibits taxpayer funds to be used on officially painted portraits. The law applies to portraits of the President, the Vice President, a member of Congress, the head of an executive agency, or the head of an office of the legislative branch."

Lawmakers say such portraits could cost between \$20,000 and \$40,000. "Cassidy said that taxpayer funds shouldn't be used on 'oil paintings that very few people ever see or care about,'" Diaz writes. "At the White House specifically, presidents get two official portraits -- one for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, and then one for the White House -- as well as the first ladies. But the new law doesn't mean an end to paintings such as the recently unveiled Obama portraits recently displayed at the Smithsonian's gallery. The individual paintings of President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama were funded by private donations." More: <https://cnn.it/2E3W71O>

BLACK LEADERS DECLINE TO DEFEND MCCASKILL ON MINORITY

OUTREACH -- African-American leaders in Missouri are frustrated with Sen. Claire McCaskill's (D-Mo.) lack of engagement with minority voters, so much so that they declined to sign a letter pushing back against comments Bruce Franks, a prominent black activist and state legislator from St. Louis, made last month when he urged McCaskill to "show up" and earn the support of Missouri's minority voters. "McCaskill had asked African American elected officials in Kansas City and St. Louis to sign the letter," Lindsay Wise, Jason Hancock and Bryan Lowry report for The Kansas City Star. None did.

Reps. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) and Lacy Clay (D-Mo.) were among those approached. "I'm 100 percent certain that nobody signed it," Cleaver told the newspaper. "We talked about it very seriously and strongly and every one of us said: 'We're going to support her, but signing this letter isn't going to achieve what she wants. It's just going to make people angry.'" McCaskill is running for reelection in a state Trump won by nearly 19 points in 2016, but African-American leaders fear the centrist senator will leave minority voters feeling taken for granted. More: <http://bit.ly/2pRyac7>

HOW THE BERNIE SANDERS WING WON THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES --

Conservative Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-Ill.) won his primary last week in what was the first major battle between the Democratic Party's establishment and progressive wings. "But don't be confused about what it means," Charlie Mahtesian warns. "The war is already over, and the establishment lost. Even though only two states have actually voted so far this primary election season--Texas, a red-state redoubt, and Illinois, a blue-state stronghold--the battle for supremacy this primary season is all but complete."

"In state after state, the left is proving to be the animating force in Democratic primaries, producing a surge of candidates who are forcefully driving the party toward a more liberal orientation on nearly every issue," he writes, noting that such candidates are running on

platforms that include single-payer health care, stricter gun control and a \$15 minimum wage. "In the surest sign of the reoriented issue landscape, they're joined by some of the most prominent prospects in the 2020 Democratic presidential field--Cory Booker, Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris among them--who are embracing the same agenda." More: <https://politi.co/2GA4n2h>

RENACCI DIDN'T DISCLOSE \$50K IN DONATIONS AS REGISTERED LOBBYIST -- Ohio Senate candidate Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Ohio) failed to disclose nearly \$50,000 in political donations as a registered Washington lobbyist dating back to the late 2000s. "The AP review identified five reporting periods from 2008 to 2010 while the Ohio Republican was registered as a lobbyist when he either failed to file the required disclosure form or reported giving no political contributions when he had given," Julie Carr Smyth reports for The Associated Press. "Renacci's campaign said that he never lobbied. They said he was registered as the lobbyist with the consulting firm he helped launch in 2008, Smokerise International Group, as a precautionary measure."

Laura Mills, Renacci's attorney, said he "never performed any lobbying activities." She said Renacci requested that her office deactivate him in 2009 because the entity to which he was a member never lobbied "and he wanted to be in full compliance of the law prior to entering into Congress." Mills gave AP a form that listed Renacci's lobbyist status as "inactive" as of Aug. 1, 2009. "But an AP review found Mills didn't file the companion form required to deactivate Renacci's registration until 2011... about four months after he entered Congress. And Renacci continued to file and digitally sign lobbyist disclosure reports, other than the two he missed, through mid-2011, as an active lobbyist would." More: <http://bit.ly/2GmfJUf>

COCHRAN REPLACEMENT MEETS WITH WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS -- Cindy Hyde-Smith, who will replace Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) after he retires next week, met with top White House officials Wednesday -- but not the president. "It was unclear whether the gathering would forge a thaw in the troubled relationship or move the president any closer to endorsing Hyde-Smith, as her supporters would like to see," The Washington Post's Robert Costa, Sean Sullivan and Josh Dawsey report. "The uncertain dynamic has complicated the outlook for Republicans in the midterm election, as they seek to defend their 51-49 Senate majority." White House officials told Gov. Phil Bryant last week that the president didn't support his pick of Hyde-Smith, a former Democrat. More: <https://wapo.st/2E1al6V>

SCOTUS CASTS DOUBT ON PARTISAN REDISTRICTING -- The Supreme Court on Wednesday grappled with the question of how much gerrymandering is too much. "Republicans who sued to overturn the congressional district lines that Maryland implemented after the 2010 census map found allies in the court's four liberal justices, who expressed sympathy for their claims during oral arguments," Steven Shepard reports. "What's less clear is whether those four can recruit another justice to their side ... A ruling against the map could fundamentally alter the redistricting process in the 37 states where the legislature draws the lines, limiting the parties' ability to create maps to their advantage." More: <https://politi.co/2GxPXQf>

TRANSITIONS -- Chase Jennings is communications director for Rep. Ted Budd (R-N.C.). He previously served as director of conservative media and radio for the RNC.

David Wysong is taking a leave of absence as chief of staff for Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas) to advise O'Rourke in his Senate campaign. **Frank Pigulski** is stepping in as acting chief of staff.

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- The House and Senate are out.

WEDNESDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- Ben Howard was first to correctly guess that former Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) is the nephew-in-law of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- Two former presidents are buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The one who is better known is John F. Kennedy. Who is the second one? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: nmccaskill@politico.com.

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To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/03/29/scalise-gets-private-push-for-speaker-senate-gets-another-confirmation-battle-is-the-farm-bill-already-dead-missouri-dems-dont-defend-mccaskill-260658>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com
Sent: Fri 11/10/2017 6:36:36 PM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Are you guys still able to get me these numbers? Thanks.

On Thu, Nov 2, 2017 at 3:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We will get a number tomorrow for you.

On Nov 2, 2017, at 6:19 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

I am not trying to be a pest, but can someone please answer my inquiries?

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 5:42 PM, Alexander Nazaryan
<a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Hi, I don't think my question was especially difficult: given that Admin. Pruitt has explicitly said he would like to lighten regulatory burden, can you please quantify how he has done so?

I'd also asked about how many Regional hqs he has visited. No answer to that, either.

I'm sure you're all very busy, but he is a public official, running a public agency. I believe the people deserve answers.

Thank you.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 12:57 PM Alexander Nazaryan
<alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan
<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation.

‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example.

‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” (NTK Network, Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

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Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 7/21/2017 5:24:44 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing: SPICER RESIGNS after SCARAMUCCI appointed comms director -- MUELLER asking WH staff to preserve docs related to Don Jr. meeting -- KATIE WALSH back to the RNC -- ON-CAMERA briefing at 2

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By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](#)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](#)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](#)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](#))

Good Friday afternoon. SEAN SPICER OUT -- NYT's GLENN THRUSH SCOOPED:

"Mr. Trump offered [Anthony] Scaramucci the job [of White House communications director] at 10 a.m. The president requested that Mr. Spicer stay on, but Mr. Spicer told Mr. Trump that he believed the appointment was a major mistake, according to person with direct knowledge of the exchange." <http://nyti.ms/2vrUNWR>

THE MOVE to install Scaramucci is risky. He has no experience running a press operation as communications director. While the "Mooch" has plenty of relationships with reporters, he has never been charged with setting the strategic message for a company, congressional office or White House. **KEEP IN MIND:** This is yet another top-level White House aide with no experience doing the job he has been given. Yes, he's good on television, but that's not really the job. The communications director is charged with running a massive message operation designed to promote the president and help him achieve his legislative priorities.

SPICER'S DEPARTURE was unexpected. Spicer's allies signaled he had settled into his role -- with limited on-camera briefings -- even as news broke that the president was eyeing Scaramucci for a job in the White House.

OPEN QUESTIONS ...

-- **WILL OTHERS FOLLOW?** Spicer assembled the communications teams. Many have worked with him over the years.

-- **REINCE PRIEBUS** and Spicer have worked together for years. They are personally and professional very close. What does this mean for him?

-- **WHAT'S NEXT FOR SPICER?** Networks will vie heavily for him to join as a contributor to help decode Trump. Spicer could also open up his own firm. Or, he could try and find a corporate gig. He's certainly high profile and has crisis communications experience in spades.

MORE ON SCARAMUCCI -- Read this great 2014 profile of Scaramucci from Ken

Vogel: "Rise of the showboat donor" <http://politi.co/2vs4ggu>

-- **Scaramucci slammed Trump in 2015** on Fox Business: "He's a hack politician ... It's anti-American, it is very very divisive. I'll tell you who he's going to be president of, you can tell Donald I said this: the Queens County bullies' association. ... The politicians don't wanna go at Trump because he's got a big mouth ... but I'm not a politician. Bring it!" ***He said he patched it up with Trump later that day.*** <http://bit.ly/2vsmoXZ>

SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS will have an ON-CAMERA briefing at 2 p.m.

INBOX at 12:50 p.m.: "Ryan Takes Tax Reform Push on the Road".

REVOLVING DOOR, PART II -- "Priebus ally Walsh returns to RNC," by Alex Isenstadt: "Katie Walsh, a longtime top adviser to White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, is returning to the [RNC] in a senior role. Walsh, a former top White House staffer who departed the administration this spring, will return to the RNC as senior data and digital adviser, said Ryan Mahoney, a committee spokesman.

"The move was part of a broader staff change at the RNC that unfolded on Friday. The committee announced that Ellen Bredenkoetter will serve as chief data officer, replacing Jesse Kamzol, who had been serving in that role. After leaving the White House, Walsh worked as a top staffer for America First Policies, an outside group that has been set up to promote President Donald Trump's agenda. During the 2016 campaign, Walsh served as the RNC's chief of staff." <http://politi.co/2uJ3qhQ>

DANA BASH SCOOP -- "Exclusive: Mueller asks WH staff to preserve all documents relating to June 2016 meeting": "Special counsel Robert Mueller has asked the White House to preserve all documents relating to the June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower that Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort had with a Russian lawyer and others, according to a source who has seen the letter.

"Mueller sent a notice, called a document preservation request, asking White House staff to save 'any subjects discussed in the course of the June 2016 meeting' and also 'any decisions made regarding the recent disclosures about the June 2016 meeting,' according to the source, who read portions of the letter to CNN. The letter from Mueller began: 'As you are aware the Special Counsel's office is investigating the Russian government's efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election, including any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of Donald Trump. Information concerning the June 2016 meeting between Donald J Trump Jr and Natalia Veselnitskaya is relevant to the investigation.'" <http://cnn.it/2uQ2sRM>

-- **"Trump team's attacks on Mueller rattle Washington,"** by Matt Nussbaum: "The White House is rapidly ratcheting up its public threats against special counsel Robert Mueller and his team, raising concerns among Democrats and Republicans alike across Washington. ... The prospect of Trump firing the special counsel sends shivers across

Capitol Hill, with one senior Republican congressional aide telling POLITICO on Friday that the only reason he could think of for such a move would be 'trying to obstruct justice.' 'He is a revered figure on the Hill, he is someone who has a sterling reputation,' the aide said of Mueller. 'No one really questions his integrity.'" <http://politi.co/2tmYNq5>

FLASHBACK... DONALD TRUMP formally accepted the Republican nomination for president one year ago today in Cleveland. ... Spicer's press conference about Trump's inauguration crowd sizes was six months ago today.

THE FAA has put a flight restriction around Morristown, New Jersey -- the airport near Trump's Bedminster summer place. The warning is in effect from August 3- August 20. (h/t Zeke)

TURN OF THE SCREW -- "Moscow lawyer who met Trump Jr. had Russian spy agency as client," by Reuters' Maria Tsvetkova and Jack Stubbs: "The Russian lawyer who met Donald Trump Jr. after his father won the Republican nomination for the 2016 U.S. presidential election counted Russia's FSB security service among her clients for years, Russian court documents seen by Reuters show. The documents show that the lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, successfully represented the FSB's interests in a legal wrangle over ownership of an upscale property in northwest Moscow between 2005 and 2013.

"The FSB, successor to the Soviet-era KGB service, was headed by Vladimir Putin before he became Russian president. There is no suggestion that Veselnitskaya is an employee of the Russian government or intelligence services, and she has denied having anything to do with the Kremlin. ... Veselnitskaya did not reply to emailed Reuters questions about her work for the FSB. The FSB did not respond to a request for comment." <http://reut.rs/2tww4mD>

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "Every now and then I'm wistful about it, but most of the time I would say, maybe I've avoided an ulcer, you know?" -- former Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) to the Omaha World-Herald on if he regrets not running for reelection in 2012. <http://bit.ly/2twqila>

SPOTTED: Michelle Obama at the fitness resort The Ranch in Malibu this week.

MAKES SENSE, RIGHT? -- "AP sources: U.S. to ban Americans from traveling to NKorea," by Matt Lee: "The Trump administration will ban American citizens from traveling to North Korea, U.S. officials said Friday, following the death of university student Otto Warmbier who died in June after falling into a coma in a North Korean prison. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had decided to impose 'geographical travel restriction' for North Korea, the officials said, which would make it illegal to use U.S. passports to enter the country. They said the restriction would be published in the Federal Register next week and will take effect 30 days after that." <http://bit.ly/2vrUQSS>

REMEMBERING RALPH REGULA -- From Cleveland.com's Sabrina Eaton: "Ralph S.

Regula, a congenial gentleman farmer from the Canton area who channeled reams of federal money to Northeast Ohio during a 36-year congressional career, has died. He was 92 years old. ... After stints as a teacher, school administrator, attorney, state legislator, and Ohio Board of Education member, Regula, a Republican, found his long-term public service niche upon his 1972 election to the U.S. House of Representatives. As obstruction and theatrics took over Congress, Regula maintained a low-key style and distaste for political gamesmanship." <http://bit.ly/2twwBol>

-- **REGULA** is the second longest-serving House Republican ever. He was elected in 1973 and retired in 2009. He was a cardinal -- the nickname for chairmen of House Appropriations subcommittees.

UNDER PRESSURE -- "White House enlisting conservative groups to pressure GOP senators on health care bill," by Josh Dawsey: "President Donald Trump's legislative affairs team has asked a number of conservative groups to score next week's vote - or judge members and their re-election campaigns based on whether they support it. They have told the groups they want to keep pressuring members, two people familiar with the conversations say, even if the vote fails next week." <http://politi.co/2tmHu8F>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Sean Hannity will no longer receive Buckley Award after controversy," by CNN's Jake Tapper: "Fox News Channel star anchor Sean Hannity will no longer receive the conservative Media Research Center's William F. Buckley Award for Media Excellence at its September 21 gala, sources familiar with the situation tell CNN. ... A source familiar with the situation tells CNN that [William's son] Christopher Buckley 'expressed great dismay' at the announcement that the award would go to Hannity, who has spent a great deal of time insulting conservative intellectuals on Twitter, particularly since he became a strong supporter of Donald Trump. ... Sources tell CNN that the [Media Research Center] leadership discussed ways to allow Hannity to save face by acting as if a scheduling conflict would prevent him from accepting the award." <http://cnnmon.ie/2twErP4>

-- **Randy Lemmerman and Sara Smith** are both starting next week as editors at POLITICO. Carrie Budoff Brown emails the staff: "Both Randy and Sara will work across teams to support our politics and policy coverage throughout the evening, augmenting the strong work of our existing night editors and producers who have been running in high gear. Randy, who spent the past decade as a news editor for the International New York Times and International Herald Tribune, joins us Monday. ... Sara, a CQ-Roll Call deputy editor who moved everything from breaking Congress news to morning newsletters, will join our night Pro editing operation on Tuesday."

OUT AND ABOUT -- Dan McCarthy of DMM Strategies hosted a party last night at the Metropolitan Square building. **SPOTTED:** John Bozella, Rhonda Bentz, John Milne, Todd Cohn, James Rosen, Jennifer Johnson, Bob Marsh, Maddie Milam, Jeff Wiener, Ryan Day, Cameron Griffith, Alex Clark, Ed Rahal, Ashley Kern, and Ryan Eaton, James Swanson and his son Cameron Swanson.

TRANSITIONS -- Mike Luce is now the national campaigns director at the Dover Group, a Democratic direct mail and digital strategy firm. ... **Katie Petru** is starting on Nestle Purina's P.R. team. She was previously manager of corporate communications at Anheuser-Busch.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - WSJ politics reporter **Reid Epstein**, and **Kate Goodloe**, associate at Covington and Burling, email friends and family: "Wesley Mitchell Goodloe Epstein came into our world Thursday at 12:34 p.m. He has a thick mop of brown hair atop his 21-inch, 7-pound, 15-ounce frame. Kate and I are thrilled he's here. Jonathan announced that 'I like him' and 'I love his hat,' so we think he'll get to thrilled soon too." *Pics* <http://bit.ly/2gQ5K0Y> ... <http://bit.ly/2uQ9jun> ... <http://bit.ly/2vIxWWk>

WEEKEND WEDDING -- Thibault Bouterin, senior account manager in the energy practice of FleishmanHillard, married creative director **Pasha Jacobs**. The couple got married over the weekend in Sainte-Gemmes-sur-Loire, France and met in London in 2012. *Pic* <http://politi.co/2tiVXSW>

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From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 4/6/2018 6:26:51 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Hickman, Embler start new comms shops — Business Roundtable hires K&L Gates — Today's tariff news

By Theodoric Meyer and Marianne LeVine | 04/06/2018 02:24 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Garrett Ross

NEW SHOPS: Two veteran Republicans are starting their own communications shops: **Bryan Hickman**, a speechwriter for Sen. **Orrin Hatch** (R-Utah), has left Capitol Hill after nearly 14 years to start his own communications firm, **MBH Media and Communications**. He said that his main focus starting out will be providing communications services to lobbying firms and trade associations. "The biggest thing I bring specifically to the table is a pretty broad and extensive background in policy," Hickman told PI, citing his experience as a staffer on the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee. "The writing side of lobbying is what appealed to me most and I realized I didn't have to be a lobbyist to do that." Hickman is also an executive communications director with **Princeton Strategic Communications**.

- **Geoff Embler** is starting his own firm, too. **Second Mill** will handle opposition research, communications and grassroots work for political and corporate clients. Embler was previously a senior vice president at **Definers Public Affairs** and before that helped start **America Rising** and worked for the **NRCC** and the **NRSC**. Second Mill will be a one-man shop for the time being.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE: **Matt Dennis**, the communications director for the House Appropriations Committee on the Democratic side, is leaving the Hill to join **CRD Associates** to start a new communications practice. In an interview with PI, Dennis said that the new practice will focus on public communications, media relations, writing and crisis communications. "I have developed a lot of good and close relationships with a lot of journalists that I've worked with over my time on the Hill. I've developed a pretty wide network of people who are on the Hill and off now," he said, adding, "I'm hoping I'll be able to draw on all of those relationships to make this new practice area a success." Prior to his stint as comms director on the Appropriations Committee, he was communications director for Reps. **Nita Lowey** (D-N.Y.) and **Rush Holt** (D-N.J.). He starts Monday.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips always welcome: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE HIRES K&L GATES: The **Business Roundtable** has added **K&L Gates** to its stable of Washington lobbying firms. **Stephen Martinko**, a former chief of staff to House Transportation Committee Chairman **Bill Shuster**, will lobby for the trade group on transportation and infrastructure issues, according to a disclosure filing. The Business Roundtable spent more than \$27 million on lobbying last year and retains 10 other lobbying firms.

TODAY'S TARIFF NEWS: The tariff fight between the United States and China doesn't appear to be ending anytime soon, after President **Donald Trump** threatened on Thursday night to impose another \$100 billion in tariffs on Chinese imports. The **National Retail Federation** held a weekly meeting at its office Friday morning with a coalition of business groups to discuss the tariffs. "It's going to take a little while for us to figure out what next steps are," **David French**, the federation's top lobbyist, told PI. "We're certainly talking to the White House, we're talking to USTR, we're talking to folks on the Hill. ... We are urgently delivering the message that the White House and the Chinese need to solve this without kicking off a trade war." In addition to the NRF, representatives for the **Information Technology Industry Council**, the **Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America**, the **American Apparel & Footwear Association** and the **Consumer Technology Association** and other industry groups also attended the meeting. CTA reached out to members Thursday asking how the tariffs would impact them.

- **The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's CEO Barbara Glenn** issued a statement Thursday urging "the United States and China to end this high-stakes trade war." Glenn told PI that the group plans to request meetings with Agriculture Secretary **Sonny Perdue**, Commerce Secretary **Wilbur Ross** and the U.S. trade representative's chief agricultural negotiator, **Gregg Doud**.

- One challenge for lobbyists and trade lawyers will be how to get exemptions for their clients, amid intense competition. **Warren Maruyama**, who was the USTR's general counsel under President **George W. Bush** and is now a partner at **Hogan Lovells**, said that "if you want to get a product off the list you file written comments and show up at the hearing." The Trump administration appears "pretty committed to a transparent, aboveboard process, so ignoring the notice and comment procedure, and relying solely on political connections or congressional pressure, may involve some risks," Maruyama added. The most powerful argument for an exemption is that failing to grant one will lead to the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs, he said. He predicted trade organizations will play big role in the fight to get exemptions, "particularly if companies don't want to show their face."

HOW PATIENT ADVOCACY GROUPS HELP PHARMA ON THE HILL: **Kaiser Health News' Emily Kopp, Sydney Lupkin and Elizabeth Lucas** are out with an investigation into the pharmaceutical industry's ties to patient advocacy groups. Fourteen pharmaceutical companies that "contributed \$116 million to patient advocacy groups reported only about \$63 million in lobbying activities that same year. Though their primary missions are to focus attention on the needs of patients with a particular disease - such as arthritis, heart disease or various cancers - some groups effectively supplement the work lobbyists perform, providing patients to testify on Capitol Hill and organizing letter-writing and social media campaigns that are beneficial to pharmaceutical companies." **Full story.**

IF YOU MISSED IT: "Environmental Protection Agency chief **Scott Pruitt** was at times slow to pay the rent on his \$50-per-night lease in a Capitol Hill condo, according to two people with knowledge of the situation - forcing his lobbyist landlord to pester him for payment," **POLITICO's Eliana Johnson and Andrew Restuccia** report. The lobbyist, of course, is **Vicki**

Hart, whose husband, **J. Steven Hart** of **Williams & Jensen**, has put out a statement on the matter.

- "As I have stated previously, the condominium is not owned by Williams & Jensen, its partners, or any other employees of the firm, and any suggestion that Administrator Pruitt's short-term rental of one of its bedrooms in 2017 resulted in undue influence for the firm or its clients with business before the EPA is simply false," Hart said in the statement. "I am confident in these facts, and certain that all fair and impartial assessments of the matter will conclude accordingly. Finally, I apologize to my wife, Vicki, whose fantastic career is being maligned unnecessarily."

JOBS REPORT

- **J. Jioni Palmer** is now director of communications at **PRRI**. He previously owned and operated his own media and public affairs firm.

- **CLS Strategies** has promoted **Ray De Lorenzi** to partner. He was previously a managing associate.

- The **Consumer Technology Association** has promoted **Karen Chupka** to executive vice president for CES and **Tiffany Moore** to senior vice president for political and industry affairs.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Cantwell Murphy Victory Fund (Sens. [Maria Cantwell](#) and [Chris Murphy](#))

House Victory Project (Mikie Sherrill, Jason Crow, Ann Kirkpatrick, Susie Lee, Brad Ashford, Angie Craig, Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, Tom Malinowski, Elaine Luria, Elissa Slotkin)

NEW PACs:

42028ORG (Super PAC)

AI PACino (Super PAC)

MJ28ORG (Super PAC)

New Mexico Strong Fund (PAC)

Progress4VA1 (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Alignment Government Strategies: Comrod Inc.

Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC: Novum Pharma

Capitol Hill Consulting Group: Quintillion

Holland & Knight LLP: Artoc Group for Investment & Development

Illumina, Inc.: Illumina, Inc.

Impossible Foods Inc.: Impossible Foods Inc.

James Callan Associates: North Dakota Grain Growers Association

Jonathan Gregory: Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP(on behalf of ZHS IP Americas Sarl & APCO Worldwide)
K&L Gates LLP: The Business Roundtable, Inc.
O'Brien, Gentry & Scott, LLC: Q30 Innovations, LLC
Peck Madigan Jones: Celgene Corporation
State Federal Strategies: Physicians Advocacy Institute
Tiber Creek Health Strategies, Inc.: Peck Madigan Jones (on behalf of Celgene Corporation)
Williams and Jensen, PLLC: Indexed Annuity Leadership Council

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Crossroads Strategies, LLC: Air Line Pilots Association
Crossroads Strategies, LLC: Cypress Advocacy, LLC on behalf of COFINA Seniors Coalition (informal coalition)
Cyrrus Analytics LLC: ACT/IAC
Holland & Knight LLP: Forest City Enterprises
Jacobs Scholz & Associates, LLC: Vijuk Equipment, Inc.
Ms. Roberta Valente: National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Rehabilitation Association: National Rehabilitation Association
Stark Strategic, LLC: NCTA-The Internet & Television Association
Vanguard Government Strategies, LLC: Assurance Technology Corporation Inc

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Sent: Wed 3/14/2018 1:48:58 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL -- EPA Morning News Highlights 03.14.18
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EPA Morning News Highlights 03.14.18

Bloomberg: EPA Chief signals showdown with California on Fuel Emissions Standards

The Trump administration's chief environmental regulator signaled a coming showdown with California, warning the state won't dictate the future of ambitious automobile fuel economy regulations enacted by the Obama administration. "California is not the arbiter of these issues," said Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt. California regulates greenhouse gas emissions at the state level, "but that shouldn't and can't dictate to the rest of the country what these levels are going to be."

E&E News: Pruitt issues guidance on new source permitting

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt took a fresh step today toward relaxing New Source Review permitting requirements by condensing the forecasting process for emission increases expected from a plant expansion or other significant modifications to a major industrial pollution source. The change, quickly hailed by business groups and criticized by one environmental organization, revolves around a reworking of the two-step procedure used to determine whether such an expansion triggers the requirement to obtain an NSR permit before beginning construction.

Reuters: U.S. biofuels sector blasts EPA settlement with bankrupt Philadelphia refinery

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to grant a bankrupt Philadelphia refiner relief from biofuel laws drew criticism on Tuesday from the country's biofuels sector and its allies, who said it sets a bad precedent. The EPA and the Carlyle Group-backed Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery agreed on Monday that the refiner will have to satisfy only roughly half of its \$350 million in outstanding compliance obligations under the U.S. Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). The RFS requires refiners to blend biofuels such as ethanol into their fuel or buy credits, known as RINs, from those that do.

Arkansas Democrat Gazette: Farming Agency hails visit to D.C.

"They found out that we were in D.C., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt had his people to call us and ask if we could meet with him," Veach said. "I'll be honest with you: I've been coming to D.C. for a long [time] and this is probably one of the best meetings I've had in D.C." Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general, met with about 30 Arkansans and left a good impression, Veach said. "He is very, very understanding and smart. Very understanding and he listened. He's not telling you, 'This is the way it's going to be,' and that's huge," Veach said.

Daily Caller: Trump's EPA just overhauled a 'complicated' part of the federal permitting process

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a guidance to clear up uncertainties in obtaining air quality permits required to build or modify facilities, like power plants and refineries. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said the new guidance, or New Source Review (NSR), would make it easier to launch new projects or expand existing ones while maintaining air quality protections.

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National Morning News Highlights 03.14.18

The Washington Post: House election too close to call with candidates separated by couple hundred votes

A special election for a U.S. House seat was too close to call late Tuesday as Democrat Conor Lamb and Republican Rick Saccone were separated by several hundred votes in a race that had become a test of President Trump's political clout.

With thousands of absentee and provisional ballots outstanding, Lamb earned 49.8 percent of votes cast and Saccone earned 49.6 percent, with 100 percent of precincts reporting, according to the Associated Press, which said the race was too close to project a winner. A recount is possible if the candidates are separated by 0.5 percentage points or less.

Washington Examiner: Trump's CIA nominee will face questions on torture

Senators and human rights groups are already planning to press President Trump's nominee to head the CIA about her role in approving enhanced interrogation techniques, just hours after Trump announced her pending nomination. Many Republicans and Democrats said Tuesday they don't know much about Gina Haspel, who has spent more than three decades at the CIA and is now the deputy director. But she has raised concern from key lawmakers, including Senate

Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., whose support could be critical in assuring her confirmation.

TRUMP TWEETS

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-13/epa-chief-signals-showdown-with-california-on-tailpipe-standards>

EPA Chief signals showdown with California on Fuel Emissions Standards

By: Jennifer Dlouhy, Ryan Beene, and John Lippert; 03/13/18

The Trump administration's chief environmental regulator signaled a coming showdown with California, warning the state won't dictate the future of ambitious automobile fuel economy regulations enacted by the Obama administration.

"California is not the arbiter of these issues," said Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt. California regulates greenhouse gas emissions at the state level, "but that shouldn't and can't dictate to the rest of the country what these levels are going to be."

The EPA faces an April 1 deadline to decide whether Obama-era corporate average fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks from 2022 to 2025 are attainable or should be revised. President Donald Trump's administration already ripped up the EPA's conclusion that no changes are needed, issued by the agency during former President Barack Obama's final weeks in the White House.

During a wide-ranging interview with Bloomberg News on Tuesday, Pruitt dismissed the possibility of setting standards beyond 2025, casting doubt on an offer by California officials who have said they would consider easing current standards in exchange for extending them beyond that year. The state is developing its own standards through 2030.

"Being predictive about what's going to be taking place out in 2030 is really hard," Pruitt said. "I think it creates problems when you do that too aggressively. That's not something we're terribly focused on right now."

Pruitt said the EPA is not "presently" looking at extending standards beyond 2025. California Air Resources Board Chairman Mary Nichols has signaled a willingness to discuss altering the state's auto rules in the near term if the Trump administration agrees to develop efficiency targets further into the future.

Automakers aggressively lobbied Trump to take a new look at the standards, arguing they need to be reviewed in light of surging light-truck sales, low gasoline prices and tepid demand for plug-in vehicles.

Even so, the companies have repeatedly stressed in recent weeks that they hope the federal government and California will continue coordinating their tailpipe emissions policies. They've also invested billions of dollars in electric cars aimed not just at California but also overseas markets, especially China.

Pruitt said setting fuel economy standards that are too aggressive would be counterproductive.

"The whole purpose of CAFE standards is to make cars more efficient than people are actually buying," Pruitt said. "If you just come in and try to drive this to a point where the auto sector in Detroit just makes cars that people don't want to purchase, then people are staying in older cars, and the emission levels are worse, which defeats the overall purpose of what we're trying to achieve."

The current debate was set in motion seven years ago, when automakers agreed to a trio of coordinated fuel economy rules overseen by the EPA, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and CARB that get more stringent each year through 2025. The requirements target a fleet average of more than 50 miles per gallon -- equivalent to about 36 mpg in real-world driving.

"We want to hear from those folks in California and hear from the political leadership and try to make some informed decisions, but also say at the same time, we have a job to do," Pruitt said. "We're going to do our job. And if there are steps being taken to impede that, we'll have to address that."

Reached by telephone Tuesday, Nichols said, "My only comment is, 'nothing new.' That's it."

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, which has the most to gain as the U.S. automaker with the highest percentage of light trucks in its lineup, jumped on the news, rising as much as 0.8 percent. The shares have more than doubled since Trump's election, in part on optimism that it will be able to sell more Jeep SUVs and Ram pickups if the new administration rolls back standards set under his predecessor, Barack Obama. General Motors Co. and Ford Motor Co. shares also rose on Tuesday.

"California has been setting its own tailpipe standards for the better part of half a century," said Roland Hwang, transportation director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "There are hardliners in the auto industry who would like to see us blunder into a confrontation, but there are also a lot of auto people with whom I talk who'd like to figure this out."

Pruitt did not directly answer whether he would seek to revoke waivers from the federal law that allows California to set its own air pollution requirements. But, he signaled his concern with California's outsize role. "Federalism is not one state dictating to the rest of the country what should occur in the area of CAFE," he said.

Separately, Pruitt brushed away reports that White House officials have killed his plans for a "red team, blue team" debate examining the scientific research on climate change. "Don't believe everything you read," he said.

"It's very important that I think the American people have a transparent, objective discussion about this issue," Pruitt said. "The vehicle by which we achieve that is something yet to be determined."

Pruitt said he wouldn't prejudge what that review would mean for the EPA's landmark 2009 conclusion that greenhouse gases endanger human health and welfare. Some conservatives argue the Trump administration's regulatory rollbacks are in jeopardy if the EPA doesn't strip that so-called "endangerment finding" from the books.

Pruitt repeated his assertion that there are open questions about the extent to which humans contribute to climate change, and he questioned the ability to "look forward 80 plus years" and predict the ideal global average surface temperature in 2100.

The U.S. Global Change Research Program, which includes staff from the EPA and every major federal science agency, [said in a report last November](#) that the global average surface air temperature has increased by 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit since 1900, making it "the warmest in the history of modern civilization."

Those researchers called it "extremely likely that human activity" is the cause, warned the trend will continue unless greenhouse gas are reduced and emphasized "there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence."

Pruitt downplayed the EPA's role in that assessment, noting it was the product of several government agencies. It's not a matter of whether those scientific warnings are "right or wrong," Pruitt said, but "making sure that all voices are heard in the process, because there are people that disagree with that."

Government-sponsored scientific research on climate change and other environmental issues needs to be open for public scrutiny, with its conclusions subject to "robust analysis," Pruitt said.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2018/03/13/stories/1060076233>

Pruitt issues guidance on new source permitting

By: Sean Reilly, 3/13/18

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt took a fresh step today toward relaxing New Source Review permitting requirements by condensing the forecasting process for emission increases expected from a plant expansion or other significant modifications to a major industrial pollution source.

The change, quickly hailed by business groups and criticized by one environmental organization, revolves around a reworking of the two-step procedure used to determine whether such an expansion triggers the requirement to obtain an NSR permit before beginning construction.

Up to now, the first step has been to calculate whether the proposed project would by itself lead to "a significant emissions increase," Pruitt wrote in a nine-page guidance memorandum to EPA's regional offices.

That's followed by an evaluation of whether the project would still lead to a significant pollution boost, once any other emissions increases or decreases stemming from other factors are taken into account.

Because of inconsistencies in the handling and interpretation of the first-stage evaluation, EPA now believes the effect has been to delay some projects and keep others from moving ahead, "even though those projects would not have resulted in a significant emissions increase," Pruitt wrote.

Under the new system, companies can also consider expected decreases in air pollution during the first step, the agency added in a news release.

"This is an important step toward achieving better outcome based on real-world impacts," EPA air chief Bill Wehrum said in the release.

At the American Forest and Paper Association, where a top official testified to a House subcommittee last month on the subject, President and CEO Donna Harman said in a statement

that the change would allow "minor projects" with emissions below regulatory thresholds to proceed quickly, "saving mills and state regulators time and money."

Ross Eisenberg, vice president for energy and resources policy at the National Association of Manufacturers, wrote in a blog post, "There is no good reason for the permitting process to create unnecessary obstacles for a manufacturer who wants to make efficiency upgrades or install modern pollution control equipment."

But John Walke, clean air director for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the new policy — by allowing companies to factor in emissions decreases at the first step — would make it easier for them to gain approval for expansions and other large-scale changes "even though there are significant emissions increases from the entire facility."

He also faulted EPA for resorting to a guidance memo to make the change. In 2006, when Wehrum served as acting air chief during part of George W. Bush's administration, the agency pursued an identical shift through a proposed rulemaking that was never completed, said Walke.

With President Trump intent on easing regulations on heavy industry, this is the third piecemeal change EPA has announced to air policy in recent months. In December, Pruitt told companies EPA would no longer challenge their pre-construction estimates of pollution increases stemming from specific projects.

In January, Wehrum announced the end to the "once in, always in" policy, which kept "maximum achievable control technology" standards in place for factories and other industrial polluters, even when their emissions of air toxics fell below the thresholds that had originally triggered those standards.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biofuels-rins/u-s-biofuels-sector-blasts-epa-settlement-with-bankrupt-philadelphia-refinery-idUSKCNIGP1RC>

U.S. biofuels sector blasts EPA settlement with bankrupt Philadelphia refinery

By: Jarrett Renshaw, 3/13/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to grant a bankrupt Philadelphia refiner relief from biofuel laws drew criticism on Tuesday from the country's biofuels sector and its allies, who said it sets a bad precedent.

The EPA and the Carlyle Group-backed Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery agreed on Monday that the refiner will have to satisfy only roughly half of its \$350 million in outstanding compliance obligations under the U.S. Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). The RFS requires refiners to blend biofuels such as ethanol into their fuel or buy credits, known as RINs, from those that do.

Independent refiners, including some as large as Valero Energy Corp, have long complained about the RFS standards, saying it has boosted costs as the price of credits rose from just a few cents in 2012 to more than \$1 at times in 2013 and 2016.

However, biofuels companies say the standards are critical to Midwest farmers and help produce cleaner, home-grown fuels like ethanol. Industry representatives complained about the EPA settlement, calling it a bailout for a mismanaged company.

"I am very troubled at the precedent this sets and there are discussions underway whether the EPA has the legal standing to grant the relief. We are exploring our options," said Michael McAdams, head of the Advanced Biofuels Association.

President Donald Trump has called several White House meetings to change the program.

The EPA has signaled it is willing to exempt more small refineries, which would limit potential buyers for the credits.

Republican Senator Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, said the settlement raises a couple questions: “How are the RIN obligations being treated compared to the other obligations of PES? Does this set an unfair precedent for other refiners that continue to act in good faith to comply with the law?”

PES was given relief on about half of its outstanding obligations. The company, which lacks blending facilities, entered into bankruptcy owing 467 million credits from 2016 and 2017, with only 210 million credits in hand, the filing showed.

The settlement puts PES on stable path to success and protects 1,100 jobs, Cherice Corley, a company spokeswoman, said in an email Tuesday. But more needs to be done, Corley said.

“This is only a partial and temporary reprieve, and we are hopeful that policymakers will substantively address the flawed RINs compliance mechanism so that a restructured PES and other independent merchant refiners can finally compete on a level playing field,” Corley said.

PES got a huge win. It does not have to go into the market and buy some 250 million in compliance credits covering 2016, 2017 and part of 2018. The refiner can turn over its available credits to the EPA, and is excused from any shortfall.

“There’s no denying it - the EPA settled in a way that was beneficial to the bankruptcy and this particular firm. It sends a bad signal about what the EPA will accept in the future,” said Scott Irwin, agricultural economist at the University of Illinois.

PES blamed its financial woes on the cost of buying the credits.. But other factors contributed to the bankruptcy, including withdrawal of more than \$590 million in dividend-style payments from the company by its investor owners.

Private equity firm Carlyle rescued the refinery from shutting in 2012, putting up \$175 million for majority control. Most dividends paid to the investor group were backed by loans taken against refinery assets.

Monday's settlement alleviates fears that the refinery was going to be exempt from the program moving forward or be allowed to dump millions of credits onto the market, traders said.

The EPA will now require PES to buy credits semi-annually, rather than annually. That makes it more difficult for the refinery, the largest on the U.S. East Coast, to build a large short position or defer its obligations and risk getting into a hole, as it did in 2017.

Prices for renewable fuel (D6) credits for 2018 were at 39 cents on Tuesday, little changed from a day earlier, having already lost 40 percent in the last two weeks. Prices for 2017 are selling at an unusual discount versus the 2018 prices in the wake of the PES settlement, traders said.

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2018/mar/14/farming-agency-hails-visit-to-d-c-20180/>

Farming agency hails visit to D.C.

By: Frank Lockwood, 3/14/18

Arkansas Farm Bureau President Randy Veach says it really works.

Last week, the group's board members and several staff members -- 16 in all -- traveled to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. and met with one of President Donald Trump's aides about agriculture, infrastructure and the environment.

The Arkansans initiated the consultation.

"If you're bold enough to ask, they might just say 'yes,'" Veach said. "We called and asked. They gave us the meeting."

Alex Herrgott, the associate director of infrastructure at the White House Council on Environmental Quality, briefed his guests on the president's new infrastructure proposal, which envisions a \$50 billion investment in rural infrastructure.

The Pennsylvania Avenue meeting broke new ground for the organization, according to Arkansas Farm Bureau spokesman Steve Eddington.

"They've been to the White House for tours and things like that, but as far as we can tell, never for a meeting like that. So, yeah, that's a big deal," he said.

Afterward, the Arkansans were summoned to meet with the head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

"They found out that we were in D.C., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt had his people to call us and ask if we could meet with him," Veach said. "I'll be honest with you: I've been coming to D.C. for a long [time] and this is probably one of the best meetings I've had in D.C."

Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general, met with about 30 Arkansans and left a good impression, Veach said. "He is very, very understanding and smart. Very understanding and he listened. He's not telling you, 'This is the way it's going to be,' and that's huge," Veach said.

Pruitt, who traveled to Arkansas in July and discussed environmental matters with state officials, portrayed last week's meeting as productive.

"We always appreciate hearing from our nation's first environmentalists, including Arkansas Farm Bureau," he said in a written statement. "EPA is working to provide regulatory certainty, promote environmental stewardship, and reaffirm President Trump's commitment to farmers and

ranchers across the country."

A key topic of conversation: EPA water regulations and Arkansas' Discovery Farms, a dozen farms where water quality is carefully studied.

The "research is coordinated by faculty from the University of Arkansas' Agriculture Division and is conducted in collaboration with federal and state agencies promoting conservation of our natural resources," the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station website states.

While in Washington, the Arkansas Farm Bureau delegation engaged in a little international diplomacy, consulting with Mexican and Canadian embassy staff members about the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"We talked about the importance of NAFTA to the United States and our farmers and ranchers, for sure. But we talked about ... how important it is to Canada and Mexico as well. And they all agree. It's an extremely important trade agreement for them as well," he said.

Before leaving town, the Arkansans checked in with members of the state congressional delegation and their staff members.

It's time for Congress to reauthorize the farm bill, which covers everything from crop insurance and agricultural subsidies to food programs.

U.S. Sen. John Boozman, a Republican from Rogers, serves on the Senate Agriculture Committee. U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford, a Republican from Jonesboro, serves on the House version.

Veatch is letting lawmakers know that farmers need a stronger safety net.

"If we have disasters and cattle drown and crops are destroyed and poultry houses are blown away and things like that, then we've got to have some protection for those farmers. One event like that can actually take out generation after generation of farmers, all in one fell swoop," he said.

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/03/13/environmental-protection-agency-new-source-review-scott-pruitt/>

Trump's EPA just overhauled a 'complicated' part of the federal permitting process

By: Michael Bastasch, 03/13/18

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a guidance to clear up uncertainties in obtaining air quality permits required to build or modify facilities, like power plants and refineries.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said the new guidance, or New Source Review (NSR), would make it easier to launch new projects or expand existing ones while maintaining air quality protections.

"Today's NSR guidance advances President Trump's goal to streamline permitting requirements for manufacturing facilities as well as EPA's efforts to reform the overly complicated and burdensome NSR program," Pruitt said.

NSR is required for pre-construction permits under the Clean Air Act. EPA forces a project to install additional pollution control equipment, if said proposal is projected to significantly increase emissions. Changes to NSR allow permit seekers to calculate potential decreases in pollution in the same step as projecting potential increases.

Pruitt's new guidance clears up what EPA calls "inconsistent application and interpretation" of the first part of the NSR permitting process. The guidance builds on two recent EPA memos outlining policy changes on major projects.

EPA will not "second guess" power plant owners' projections when assessing the emissions of projects, the agency announced in December. Shortly after, the agency issued a memo outlining a "once in always in" policy for industrial facilities.

EPA's new guidance will make it easier to build critical infrastructure and even make existing facilities, like power plants, more efficient, industry groups said. Companies put off installing new technology for years over NSR, industries argue.

"There is no good reason for the permitting process to create unnecessary obstacles for a

manufacturer who wants to make efficiency upgrades or install modern pollution control equipment,” National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) spokesman Ross Eisenburg said in a statement.

The oil and gas industry also hailed the new guidance. “These reforms will allow our industries to be modified and expanded, while continuing to provide strong environmental and health protection for the public,” the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers said in an emailed statement.

Environmental groups criticized Pruitt’s guidance. Pruitt’s guidance circumvents the rule making process to aid heavy industry, Natural Resources Defense Council’s John Walke said.

“The air will be dirtier thanks to industry taking advantage of this new kind of amnesty,” Walke told Bloomberg.

Pruitt’s guidance is similar to NSR interpretations former President Bush’s administration sought more than a decade ago. The Bush administration abandoned the policies just before former President Obama took office in 2009.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-pennsylvanias-trump-country-a-surging-democrat-takes-house-race-down-to-the-wire/2018/03/13/d9192ccb-eba1-4cdc-bda3-dffab0ebaddd_story.html?utm_term=.3e94280cf976

House election too close to call with candidates separated by couple hundred votes

By: David Weigel and Elise Viebeck, 3/14/18

A special election for a U.S. House seat was too close to call late Tuesday as Democrat Conor Lamb and Republican Rick Saccone were separated by several hundred votes in a race that had become a test of President Trump’s political clout.

With thousands of absentee and provisional ballots outstanding, Lamb earned 49.8 percent of votes cast and Saccone earned 49.6 percent, with 100 percent of precincts reporting, according to the Associated Press, which said the race was too close to project a winner.

A recount is possible if the candidates are separated by 0.5 percentage points or less.

Shortly before midnight, Saccone told his supporters that “it’s not over yet.”

A little more than an hour later, Lamb took the stage at his party in Canonsburg to declare victory.

The scene during Pennsylvania’s special congressional election between Conor Lamb and Rick Saccone

[View Photos](#) Democrat Lamb and Republican Saccone are competing in Pennsylvania’s 18th District.

“Well, it took a little longer than we thought, but we did it,” said Lamb. “You did it! You did it!”

While the number of outstanding absentee ballots is larger than the gap between Lamb and Saccone, Democrats ended election night confident that Saccone would not win them by a large enough margin to pull ahead. The National Republican Congressional Committee said it was confident of a Saccone victory “after every legal vote is counted.”

Lamb, 33, had waged an energetic campaign in the district that Trump carried by nearly 20 points in 2016 but that opened up after the Republican incumbent was felled by scandal. Republicans cited that scandal, along with the lackluster campaign of their nominee, Rick Saccone, to minimize the closeness of the race. The district itself will disappear this year, thanks to a court decision that struck down a Republican-drawn map.

But led by the White House, Republicans had elevated the race to a high-stakes referendum on the president and the GOP. Trump made two appearances with Saccone, including a Saturday-night rally in the district, and his son Donald Trump Jr. stumped with Saccone on Monday. The president repeatedly linked his brand to Saccone.

“The Economy is raging, at an all time high, and is set to get even better,” the president tweeted on Tuesday morning. “Jobs and wages up. Vote for Rick Saccone and keep it going!”

Republican campaign committees and super PACs spent \$10.7 million to help Saccone, more than five times as much as their Democratic rivals, according to Federal Election Commission records filed Monday night.

Thanks to the court's scrambling of the congressional map, both Lamb and Saccone may well become candidates in new districts for the November midterm election before a winner is declared in this 18th Congressional District race. Candidates must collect and file 1,000 signatures for those races by March 20 — the day that some overseas ballots in Tuesday's race will be counted.

The district, a stretch of suburbs and small towns that was drawn to elect a Republican, was not the sort of place that Democrats had been expected to make competitive this year. Lamb's coalition pulled together suburban liberals, wayward Republicans and traditional Democrats who had drifted from the party on cultural issues.

The tight race added to Republican woes on a day that began with the surprise firing of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and a string of related dismissals. Republicans who hoped to fight the Pennsylvania race on the growing economy, and on the president's new tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum, found the White House frequently alienating some of the voters they needed.

As voters made their decisions Tuesday, Trump loomed large in the minds of many.

Amelia Fletcher, a registered independent from Moon Township, cast her first-ever ballot for Saccone because she likes Trump's agenda and believes he will support it.

"I really don't appreciate how he talks, but I like what he's doing now to help us out," the 18-year-old high school senior said of Trump.

In Mt. Lebanon, Dave Banyan, 65, said that he had made up his mind on the race "as soon as President Trump was President Trump." He said he did not want Democrats to get one vote closer to controlling the House of Representatives.

“I don’t want America to go back to the way it was” under President Barack Obama, said Banyan, a retired transportation worker. “Obamacare killed me. Dreamers — keep dreamin’, you know?”

However, several voters who said they were Republicans cast their ballots for Lamb — and against the president.

After casting her vote in Mt. Lebanon, a suburb of Pittsburgh, dental hygienist Janet Dellana said she had been outraged to see Trump call for arming teachers instead of limiting access to semiautomatic weapons after the deadly school shooting in Florida.

“He flip-flops on everything, but in the end, he caters to the extreme right,” said Dellana, 64. “I am a registered Republican, but as this party continues to cater to the extreme right, they push me left.”

Tim Lacey, a 69-year-old registered Democrat, said Saccone’s support for Trump overcame any loyalty to the Republican, his fellow church member and a former customer of his construction business.

“I know Rick Saccone,” said Lacey, who lives in nearby Elizabeth Township. “He’s not a golfing buddy, but he’s a good man. But anyone who supports Trump isn’t for me.”

The district — which Saccone himself had called “Trump country” — had been the sort of place where Democrats struggled to compete. While registered Democrats slightly outnumbered registered Republicans, many of those Democrats bolted from their national party during Obama’s presidency.

In 2012, eight Democrats represented part of the district in the state legislature; after 2016, they were down to one. In 2014 and 2016, Democrats did not even bother to field a challenger to Tim

Murphy, the Republican congressman whose resignation forced Tuesday's special election.

They hoped, early on, that Lamb could change their fortunes. A first-time candidate from a storied local political family, the former Marine and federal prosecutor became a natural, if cautious, politician. He was personally antiabortion but opposed to new abortion restrictions; he supported the Second Amendment but favored stronger background checks.

Saccone, a four-term state legislator with a long military and academic résumé, struggled to unite the Trump or Murphy coalitions. Labor unions, with more than 80,000 members in the district, had sometimes endorsed Murphy. They united quickly against Saccone, a supporter of "right to work" legislation who did not bother to ask the state AFL-CIO for an endorsement.

On the ground, unions ran an aggressive turnout operation, winning back many members who had backed Trump for president. Lamb's campaign focused on preserving Medicare and Social Security, and warning that Republican policies would put them at risk. The United Mine Workers of America, which had sat out the 2016 election, endorsed Lamb when the Democrat promised to support legislation that would fully fund their pensions.

That was one of several issues where Saccone never tried to meet or outflank Lamb. On Monday, as he campaigned at Canonsburg's famous Sarris Candies with Trump Jr., Saccone dodged a question about the bill on miners' pensions and accused a reporter who asked about it of talking to "liberals" instead of real miners.

It was not the only time that the Republican snapped at Democrats. At the second and final debate with Lamb, Saccone said his opponent didn't "even know the difference between North and South Korea." At his final rally, on Monday, Saccone said that "the other side" was gripped by a "hatred for our country" and a "hatred for God."

But Saccone's retail and TV ad campaigning was resoundingly positive, clashing with the negative ads that Republicans threw across the airwaves. Four groups spent more than \$1 million: the National Republican Congressional Committee (\$3.5 million), the Congressional Leadership Fund (\$3.4 million), the Republican National Committee (\$1.3 million) and America First Action (\$1.1 million).

Most of their ads were negative, portraying Lamb as a “puppet” of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), a foe of middle-class tax cuts, and eventually, as a prosecutor who had let drug dealers get light sentences.

Lamb blunted the impact of those attacks, most notably by saying in early January that he would not support Pelosi for speaker. His highest-profile surrogate, former vice president Joe Biden, has enjoyed high approval ratings from all voters since passing on a 2016 presidential bid.

Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/congress/gina-haspel-trumps-cia-nominee-to-face-questions-on-torture>

Trump’s CIA nominee will face questions on torture

By: Susan Ferrechio, 3/14/18

Senators and human rights groups are already planning to press President Trump’s nominee to head the CIA about her role in approving enhanced interrogation techniques, just hours after Trump announced her pending nomination.

Many Republicans and Democrats said Tuesday they don’t know much about Gina Haspel, who has spent more than three decades at the CIA and is now the deputy director.

But she has raised concern from key lawmakers, including Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., whose support could be critical in assuring her confirmation.

“Ms. Haspel needs to explain the nature and extent of her involvement in the CIA’s interrogation program during the confirmation process,” McCain said in a statement Tuesday. “I know the Senate will do its job in examining Ms. Haspel’s record as well as her beliefs about torture and

her approach to current law.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said he is not announcing his opposition to Haspel or Mike Pompeo, the current CIA Director who Trump has picked to serve as his new secretary of state.

But he’s not backing them yet, either. Schumer said there are “lots of outstanding questions” about both nominees, and he’s not taking a position yet.

Haspel, 61, drew opposition from human rights organizations when she was elevated to deputy director last year. They accused her of overseeing the secret prisons where suspected terrorists were questioned with “enhanced interrogation techniques,” otherwise labeled as torture, during the Bush administration.

The advocacy group Human Rights First said they oppose her nomination.

“During Gina Haspel’s long tenure at the CIA, she oversaw torture at a CIA blacksite during one of the bleakest points in our nation’s history,” said Raha Wala, the organization’s director of national security advocacy. “No one who had a hand in torturing individuals deserves to ever hold public office again, let alone lead an agency. To allow someone who had a direct hand in this illegal, immoral, and counterproductive program is to willingly forget our nation’s dark history with torture.”

Christopher Anders, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said Haspel was “up to her eyeballs in torture” at the CIA and worked to destroy the evidence.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., who sits on the Senate Intelligence panel, said he needs to question Haspel to determine whether he would vote for her.

“I don’t know much about her,” Manchin said. When asked about her oversight of enhanced

interrogation at the agency Manchin said, "We're going to be looking into that."

If confirmed, Haspel would become the first woman to ever head the CIA. She has many backers on Capitol Hill who say her role at the CIA has already been scrutinized by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., the former ranking member on the panel. But Feinstein fought against Haspel's advancement under President Obama.

Haspel's ascension to deputy did not require a confirmation vote from the Senate or a hearing. Unlike Pompeo, she has never been officially vetted by the upper chamber.

She'll now face questions and a vote from the Senate Intelligence Committee and must then win a simple majority vote by the Senate. Republicans can approve her if they stick together, and so far, they seem to be.

It's not clear they will. Not only is McCain questioning Haspel's nomination, Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., announced he'll hold a press conference Wednesday to discuss both nominations.

A Paul spokesman declined to say whether the Senator is opposed to either nominee, but Paul voted against Pompeo's confirmation to head the CIA.

"I voted against the new CIA Director because I worry that his desire for security will trump his defense of liberty," Paul said at the time in an op-ed posted on Rare.com.

Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., told the Washington Examiner that Haspel is "imminently qualified" and deserves to be confirmed.

Sen. Jim Risch, R-Iowa, who as a member of the Intelligence Committee was deeply involved in the investigations into CIA torture, said he still backs Haspel to head the CIA.

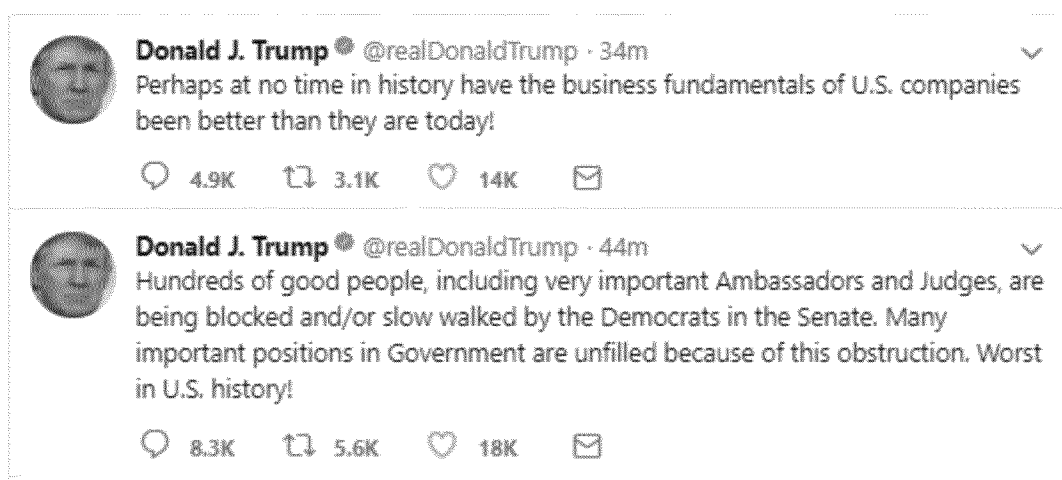
“I sat through all those investigations,” Risch told the Washington Examiner. “I don’t have any issues with that.”

Burr told the Washington Examiner that Haspel will be able allay McCain’s concerns by meeting with him. “She talked to Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Feinstein seemed satisfied with her conversations when she went in as deputy.”

Feinstein, however, said Tuesday she has not made up her mind about confirming Haspel to head the CIA. Other Democrats said they would vote no.

“I voted against Mr. Pompeo’s nomination to be CIA director because he failed to express moral opposition to torture,” said Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a war veteran. “But Ms. Haspel has done much worse. Not only did she directly supervise the torture of detainees, but she also participated in covering it up by helping to destroy the video evidence. Her reprehensible actions should disqualify her from having the privilege of serving the American people in government ever again, but apparently this President believes they merit a promotion. I could not disagree more.”

Trump Tweets



EPA Morning News Highlights 03.14.18

Bloomberg: EPA Chief signals showdown with California on Fuel Emissions Standards

The Trump administration's chief environmental regulator signaled a coming showdown with California, warning the state won't dictate the future of ambitious automobile fuel economy regulations enacted by the Obama administration. "California is not the arbiter of these issues," said Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt. California regulates greenhouse gas emissions at the state level, "but that shouldn't and can't dictate to the rest of the country what these levels are going to be."

E&E News: Pruitt issues guidance on new source permitting

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt took a fresh step today toward relaxing New Source Review permitting requirements by condensing the forecasting process for emission increases expected from a plant expansion or other significant modifications to a major industrial pollution source. The change, quickly hailed by business groups and criticized by one environmental organization, revolves around a reworking of the two-step procedure used to determine whether such an expansion triggers the requirement to obtain an NSR permit before beginning construction.

Reuters: U.S. biofuels sector blasts EPA settlement with bankrupt Philadelphia refinery

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to grant a bankrupt Philadelphia refiner relief from biofuel laws drew criticism on Tuesday from the country's biofuels sector and its allies, who said it sets a bad precedent. The EPA and the Carlyle Group-backed Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery agreed on Monday that the refiner will have to satisfy only roughly half of its \$350 million in outstanding compliance obligations under the U.S. Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). The RFS requires refiners to blend biofuels such as ethanol into their fuel or buy credits, known as RINs, from those that do.

Arkansas Democrat Gazette: Farming Agency hails visit to D.C.

"They found out that we were in D.C., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt had his people to call us and ask if we could meet with him," Veach said. "I'll be honest with you: I've been coming to D.C. for a long [time] and this is probably one of the best meetings I've had in D.C." Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general, met with about 30 Arkansans and left a good impression, Veach said. "He is very, very understanding and smart. Very understanding and he listened. He's not telling you, 'This is the way it's going to be,' and that's huge," Veach said.

Daily Caller: Trump's EPA just overhauled a 'complicated' part of the federal permitting process

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a guidance to clear up uncertainties in obtaining air quality permits required to build or modify facilities, like power plants and refineries. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said the new guidance, or New Source Review (NSR), would make it easier to launch new projects or expand existing ones while maintaining air quality protections.

National Morning News Highlights 03.14.18

The Washington Post: House election too close to call with candidates separated by couple hundred votes

A special election for a U.S. House seat was too close to call late Tuesday as Democrat Conor Lamb and Republican Rick Saccone were separated by several hundred votes in a race that had become a test of President Trump's political clout. With thousands of absentee and provisional ballots outstanding, Lamb earned 49.8 percent of votes cast and Saccone earned 49.6 percent, with 100 percent of precincts reporting, according to the Associated Press, which said the race was too close to project a winner. A recount is possible if the candidates are separated by 0.5 percentage points or less.

Washington Examiner: Trump's CIA nominee will face questions on torture

Senators and human rights groups are already planning to press President Trump's nominee to head the CIA about her role in approving enhanced interrogation techniques, just hours after Trump announced her pending nomination. Many Republicans and Democrats said Tuesday they don't know much about Gina Haspel, who has spent more than three decades at the CIA and is now the deputy director. But she has raised concern from key lawmakers, including Senate

Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., whose support could be critical in assuring her confirmation.

TRUMP TWEETS

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-13/epa-chief-signals-showdown-with-california-on-tailpipe-standards>

EPA Chief signals showdown with California on Fuel Emissions Standards

By: Jennifer Dlouhy, Ryan Beene, and John Lippert; 03/13/18

The Trump administration's chief environmental regulator signaled a coming showdown with California, warning the state won't dictate the future of ambitious automobile fuel economy regulations enacted by the Obama administration.

"California is not the arbiter of these issues," said Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt. California regulates greenhouse gas emissions at the state level, "but that shouldn't and can't dictate to the rest of the country what these levels are going to be."

The EPA faces an April 1 deadline to decide whether Obama-era corporate average fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks from 2022 to 2025 are attainable or should be revised. President Donald Trump's administration already ripped up the EPA's conclusion that no changes are needed, issued by the agency during former President Barack Obama's final weeks in the [White House](#).

During a wide-ranging interview with Bloomberg News on Tuesday, Pruitt dismissed the possibility of setting standards beyond 2025, casting doubt on an offer by California officials who have said they would consider easing current standards in exchange for extending them beyond that year. The state is developing its own standards through 2030.

"Being predictive about what's going to be taking place out in 2030 is really hard," Pruitt said. "I think it creates problems when you do that too aggressively. That's not something we're terribly focused on right now."

Pruitt said the EPA is not "presently" looking at extending standards beyond 2025. California Air Resources Board Chairman Mary Nichols has signaled a willingness to discuss altering the state's auto rules in the near term if the Trump administration agrees to develop efficiency targets further into the future.

Automakers aggressively lobbied Trump to take a new look at the standards, arguing they need to be reviewed in light of surging light-truck sales, low gasoline prices and tepid demand for plug-in vehicles.

Even so, the companies have repeatedly stressed in recent weeks that they hope the federal government and California will continue coordinating their tailpipe emissions policies. They've also invested billions of dollars in electric cars aimed not just at California but also overseas markets, especially China.

Pruitt said setting fuel economy standards that are too aggressive would be counterproductive.

"The whole purpose of CAFE standards is to make cars more efficient than people are actually buying," Pruitt said. "If you just come in and try to drive this to a point where the auto sector in Detroit just makes cars that people don't want to purchase, then people are staying in older cars, and the emission levels are worse, which defeats the overall purpose of what we're trying to achieve."

The current debate was set in motion seven years ago, when automakers agreed to a trio of coordinated fuel economy rules overseen by the EPA, the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) and CARB that get more stringent each year through 2025. The requirements target a fleet average of more than 50 miles per gallon -- equivalent to about 36 mpg in real-world driving.

"We want to hear from those folks in California and hear from the political leadership and try to make some informed decisions, but also say at the same time, we have a job to do," Pruitt said. "We're going to do our job. And if there are steps being taken to impede that, we'll have to address that."

Reached by telephone Tuesday, Nichols said, "My only comment is, 'nothing new.' That's it."

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, which has the most to gain as the U.S. automaker with the highest percentage of light trucks in its lineup, jumped on the news, rising as much as 0.8 percent. The shares have more than doubled since Trump's election, in part on optimism that it will be able to sell more Jeep SUVs and Ram pickups if the new administration rolls back standards set under his predecessor, Barack Obama. General Motors Co. and Ford Motor Co. shares also rose on Tuesday.

"California has been setting its own tailpipe standards for the better part of half a century," said Roland Hwang, transportation director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "There are hardliners in the auto industry who would like to see us blunder into a confrontation, but there are also a lot of auto people with whom I talk who'd like to figure this out."

Pruitt did not directly answer whether he would seek to revoke waivers from the federal law that allows California to set its own air pollution requirements. But, he signaled his concern with California's outsize role. "Federalism is not one state dictating to the rest of the country what should occur in the area of CAFE," he said.

Separately, Pruitt brushed away reports that White House officials have killed his plans for a "red team, blue team" debate examining the scientific research on climate change. "Don't believe everything you read," he said.

"It's very important that I think the American people have a transparent, objective discussion about this issue," Pruitt said. "The vehicle by which we achieve that is something yet to be determined."

Pruitt said he wouldn't prejudge what that review would mean for the EPA's landmark 2009 conclusion that greenhouse gases endanger human health and welfare. Some conservatives argue the Trump administration's regulatory rollbacks are in jeopardy if the EPA doesn't strip that so-called "endangerment finding" from the books.

Pruitt repeated his assertion that there are open questions about the extent to which humans contribute to climate change, and he questioned the ability to "look forward 80 plus years" and predict the ideal global average surface temperature in 2100.

The U.S. Global Change Research Program, which includes staff from the EPA and every major federal science agency, said in a report last November that the global average surface air temperature has increased by 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit since 1900, making it "the warmest in the history of modern civilization."

Those researchers called it "extremely likely that human activity" is the cause, warned the trend will continue unless greenhouse gas are reduced and emphasized "there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence."

Pruitt downplayed the EPA's role in that assessment, noting it was the product of several government agencies. It's not a matter of whether those scientific warnings are "right or wrong," Pruitt said, but "making sure that all voices are heard in the process, because there are people that disagree with that."

Government-sponsored scientific research on climate change and other environmental issues needs to be open for public scrutiny, with its conclusions subject to "robust analysis," Pruitt said.

Pruitt issues guidance on new source permitting

By: Sean Reilly, 3/13/18

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt took a fresh step today toward relaxing New Source Review permitting requirements by condensing the forecasting process for emission increases expected from a plant expansion or other significant modifications to a major industrial pollution source.

The change, quickly hailed by business groups and criticized by one environmental organization, revolves around a reworking of the two-step procedure used to determine whether such an expansion triggers the requirement to obtain an NSR permit before beginning construction.

Up to now, the first step has been to calculate whether the proposed project would by itself lead to "a significant emissions increase," Pruitt wrote in a nine-page [guidance memorandum](#) to EPA's regional offices.

That's followed by an evaluation of whether the project would still lead to a significant pollution boost, once any other emissions increases or decreases stemming from other factors are taken into account.

Because of inconsistencies in the handling and interpretation of the first-stage evaluation, EPA now believes the effect has been to delay some projects and keep others from moving ahead, "even though those projects would not have resulted in a significant emissions increase," Pruitt wrote.

Under the new system, companies can also consider expected decreases in air pollution during the first step, the agency added in a news release.

"This is an important step toward achieving better outcome based on real-world impacts," EPA air chief Bill Wehrum said in the release.

At the American Forest and Paper Association, where a top official testified to a House subcommittee last month on the subject, President and CEO Donna Harman said in a statement that the change would allow "minor projects" with emissions below regulatory thresholds to proceed quickly, "saving mills and state regulators time and money."

Ross Eisenberg, vice president for energy and resources policy at the National Association of Manufacturers, wrote in a blog post, "There is no good reason for the permitting process to create unnecessary obstacles for a manufacturer who wants to make efficiency upgrades or install modern pollution control equipment."

But John Walke, clean air director for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the new policy — by allowing companies to factor in emissions decreases at the first step — would make it easier for them to gain approval for expansions and other large-scale changes "even though there are significant emissions increases from the entire facility."

He also faulted EPA for resorting to a guidance memo to make the change. In 2006, when Wehrum served as acting air chief during part of George W. Bush's administration, the agency pursued an identical shift through a proposed rulemaking that was never completed, said Walke.

With President Trump intent on easing regulations on heavy industry, this is the third piecemeal change EPA has announced to air policy in recent months. In December, Pruitt told companies EPA would no longer challenge their pre-construction estimates of pollution increases stemming from specific projects.

In January, Wehrum announced the end to the "once in, always in" policy, which kept "maximum achievable control

technology" standards in place for factories and other industrial polluters, even when their emissions of air toxics fell below the thresholds that had originally triggered those standards.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biofuels-rins/u-s-biofuels-sector-blasts-epa-settlement-with-bankrupt-philadelphia-refinery-idUSKCN1GP1RC>

U.S. biofuels sector blasts EPA settlement with bankrupt Philadelphia refinery

By: Jarrett Renshaw, 3/13/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to grant a bankrupt Philadelphia refiner relief from biofuel laws drew criticism on Tuesday from the country's biofuels sector and its allies, who said it sets a bad precedent.

The EPA and the Carlyle Group-backed Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery agreed on Monday that the refiner will have to satisfy only roughly half of its \$350 million in outstanding compliance obligations under the U.S. Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). The RFS requires refiners to blend biofuels such as ethanol into their fuel or buy credits, known as RINs, from those that do.

Independent refiners, including some as large as Valero Energy Corp, have long complained about the RFS standards, saying it has boosted costs as the price of credits rose from just a few cents in 2012 to more than \$1 at times in 2013 and 2016.

However, biofuels companies say the standards are critical to Midwest farmers and help produce cleaner, home-grown fuels like ethanol. Industry representatives complained about the EPA settlement, calling it a bailout for a mismanaged company.

"I am very troubled at the precedent this sets and there are discussions underway whether the EPA has the legal standing to grant the relief. We are exploring our options," said Michael McAdams, head of the Advanced Biofuels Association.

President Donald Trump has called several White House meetings to change the program.

The EPA has signaled it is willing to exempt more small refineries, which would limit potential buyers for the credits.

Republican Senator Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, said the settlement raises a couple questions: "How are the RIN obligations being treated compared to the other obligations of PES? Does this set an unfair precedent for other refiners that continue to act in good faith to comply with the law?"

PES was given relief on about half of its outstanding obligations. The company, which lacks blending facilities, entered into bankruptcy owing 467 million credits from 2016 and 2017, with only 210 million credits in hand, the filing showed.

The settlement puts PES on stable path to success and protects 1,100 jobs, Cherice Corley, a company spokeswoman, said in an email Tuesday. But more needs to be done, Corley said.

"This is only a partial and temporary reprieve, and we are hopeful that policymakers will substantively address the flawed RINs compliance mechanism so that a restructured PES and other independent merchant refiners can finally compete on a level playing field," Corely said.

PES got a huge win. It does not have to go into the market and buy some 250 million in compliance credits covering 2016, 2017 and part of 2018. The refiner can turn over its available credits to the EPA, and is excused from any shortfall.

"There's no denying it - the EPA settled in a way that was beneficial to the bankruptcy and this particular firm. It sends a bad signal about what the EPA will accept in the future," said Scott Irwin, agricultural economist at the University of Illinois.

PES blamed its financial woes on the cost of buying the credits.. But other factors contributed to the bankruptcy, including withdrawal of more than \$590 million in dividend-style payments from the company by its investor owners.

Private equity firm Carlyle rescued the refinery from shutting in 2012, putting up \$175 million for majority control. Most dividends paid to the investor group were backed by loans taken against refinery assets.

Monday's settlement alleviates fears that the refinery was going to be exempt from the program moving forward or be allowed to dump millions of credits onto the market, traders said.

The EPA will now require PES to buy credits semi-annually, rather than annually. That makes it more difficult for the refinery, the largest on the U.S. East Coast, to build a large short position or defer its obligations and risk getting into a hole, as it did in 2017.

Prices for renewable fuel (D6) credits for 2018 were at 39 cents on Tuesday, little changed from a day earlier, having already lost 40 percent in the last two weeks. Prices for 2017 are selling at an unusual discount versus the 2018 prices in the wake of the PES settlement, traders said.

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2018/mar/14/farming-agency-hails-visit-to-d-c-20180/>

Farming agency hails visit to D.C.

By: Frank Lockwood, 3/14/18

Arkansas Farm Bureau President Randy Veach says it really works.

Last week, the group's board members and several staff members -- 16 in all -- traveled to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. and met with one of President Donald Trump's aides about agriculture, infrastructure and the environment.

The Arkansans initiated the consultation.

"If you're bold enough to ask, they might just say 'yes,'" Veach said. "We called and asked. They gave us the meeting."

Alex Herrgott, the associate director of infrastructure at the White House Council on Environmental Quality, briefed his guests on the president's new infrastructure proposal, which envisions a \$50 billion investment in rural infrastructure.

The Pennsylvania Avenue meeting broke new ground for the organization, according to Arkansas Farm Bureau spokesman Steve Eddington.

"They've been to the White House for tours and things like that, but as far as we can tell, never for a meeting like that. So, yeah, that's a big deal," he said.

Afterward, the Arkansans were summoned to meet with the head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

"They found out that we were in D.C., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt had his people to call us and ask if we could meet with him," Veach said. "I'll be honest with you: I've been coming to D.C. for a long [time] and this is probably one of the best meetings I've had in D.C."

Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general, met with about 30 Arkansans and left a good impression, Veach said. "He is very, very understanding and smart. Very understanding and he listened. He's not telling you, 'This is the way it's going to be,' and that's huge," Veach said.

Pruitt, who traveled to Arkansas in July and discussed environmental matters with state officials, portrayed last week's meeting as productive.

"We always appreciate hearing from our nation's first environmentalists, including Arkansas Farm Bureau," he said in a written statement. "EPA is working to provide regulatory certainty, promote environmental stewardship, and reaffirm President Trump's commitment to farmers and ranchers across the country."

A key topic of conversation: EPA water regulations and Arkansas' Discovery Farms, a dozen farms where water quality is carefully studied.

The "research is coordinated by faculty from the University of Arkansas' Agriculture Division and is conducted in collaboration with federal and state agencies promoting conservation of our natural resources," the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station website states.

While in Washington, the Arkansas Farm Bureau delegation engaged in a little international diplomacy, consulting with Mexican and Canadian embassy staff members about the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"We talked about the importance of NAFTA to the United States and our farmers and ranchers, for sure. But we talked about ... how important it is to Canada and Mexico as well. And they all agree. It's an extremely important trade agreement for them as well," he said.

Before leaving town, the Arkansans checked in with members of the state congressional delegation and their staff members.

It's time for Congress to reauthorize the farm bill, which covers everything from crop insurance and agricultural subsidies to food programs.

U.S. Sen. John Boozman, a Republican from Rogers, serves on the Senate Agriculture Committee. U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford, a Republican from Jonesboro, serves on the House version.

Veach is letting lawmakers know that farmers need a stronger safety net.

"If we have disasters and cattle drown and crops are destroyed and poultry houses are blown away and things like that, then we've got to have some protection for those farmers. One event like that can actually take out generation after generation of farmers, all in one fell swoop," he said.

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/03/13/environmental-protection-agency-new-source-review-scott-pruitt/>

Trump's EPA just overhauled a 'complicated' part of the federal permitting process

By: Michael Bastasch, 03/13/18

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a guidance to clear up uncertainties in obtaining air quality permits required to build or modify facilities, like power plants and refineries.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said the new guidance, or New Source Review (NSR), would make it easier to launch new projects or expand existing ones while maintaining air quality protections.

“Today’s NSR guidance advances President Trump’s goal to streamline permitting requirements for manufacturing facilitates as well as EPA’s efforts to reform the overly complicated and burdensome NSR program,” Pruitt said.

NSR is required for pre-construction permits under the Clean Air Act. EPA forces a project to install additional pollution control equipment, if said proposal is projected to significantly increase emissions. Changes to NSR allow permit seekers to calculate potential decreases in pollution in the same step as projecting potential increases.

Pruitt’s new guidance clears up what EPA calls “inconsistent application and interpretation” of the first part of the NSR permitting process. The guidance builds on two recent EPA memos outlining policy changes on major projects.

EPA will not “second guess” power plant owners’ projections when assessing the emissions of projects, the agency announced in December. Shortly after, the agency issued a memo outlining a “once in always in” policy for industrial facilities.

EPA’s new guidance will make it easier to build critical infrastructure and even make existing facilities, like power plants, more efficient, industry groups said. Companies put off installing new technology for years over NSR, industries argue.

“There is no good reason for the permitting process to create unnecessary obstacles for a manufacturer who wants to make efficiency upgrades or install modern pollution control equipment,” National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) spokesman Ross Eisenburg said in a statement.

The oil and gas industry also hailed the new guidance. “These reforms will allow our industries to be modified and expanded, while continuing to provide strong environmental and health protection for the public,” the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers said in an emailed statement.

Environmental groups criticized Pruitt’s guidance. Pruitt’s guidance circumvents the rule making process to aid heavy industry, Natural Resources Defense Council’s John Walke said.

“The air will be dirtier thanks to industry taking advantage of this new kind of amnesty,” Walke told Bloomberg.

Pruitt’s guidance is similar to NSR interpretations former President Bush’s administration sought more than a decade ago. The Bush administration abandoned the policies just before former President Obama took office in 2009.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-pennsylvanias-trump-country-a-surging-democrat-takes-house-race-down-to-the-wire/2018/03/13/d9192ccb-eba1-4cdc-bda3-dffab0ebaddc_story.html?utm_term=.3e94280cf976

House election too close to call with candidates separated by couple hundred votes

By: David Weigel and Elise Viebeck, 3/14/18

A special election for a U.S. House seat was too close to call late Tuesday as Democrat Conor Lamb and Republican Rick Saccone were separated by several hundred votes in a race that had become a test of President Trump’s political clout.

With thousands of absentee and provisional ballots outstanding, Lamb earned 49.8 percent of votes cast and Saccone earned 49.6 percent, with 100 percent of precincts reporting, according to the Associated Press, which said the race was too close to project a winner.

A recount is possible if the candidates are separated by 0.5 percentage points or less.

Shortly before midnight, Saccone told his supporters that “it’s not over yet.”

A little more than an hour later, Lamb took the stage at his party in Canonsburg to declare victory.

The scene during Pennsylvania’s special congressional election between Conor Lamb and Rick Saccone
View Photos Democrat Lamb and Republican Saccone are competing in Pennsylvania’s 18th District.
“Well, it took a little longer than we thought, but we did it,” said Lamb. “You did it! You did it!”

While the number of outstanding absentee ballots is larger than the gap between Lamb and Saccone, Democrats ended election night confident that Saccone would not win them by a large enough margin to pull ahead. The National Republican Congressional Committee said it was confident of a Saccone victory “after every legal vote is counted.”

Lamb, 33, had waged an energetic campaign in the district that Trump carried by nearly 20 points in 2016 but that opened up after the Republican incumbent was felled by scandal. Republicans cited that scandal, along with the lackluster campaign of their nominee, Rick Saccone, to minimize the closeness of the race. The district itself will disappear this year, thanks to a court decision that struck down a Republican-drawn map.

But led by the White House, Republicans had elevated the race to a high-stakes referendum on the president and the GOP. Trump made two appearances with Saccone, including a Saturday-night rally in the district, and his son Donald Trump Jr. stumped with Saccone on Monday. The president repeatedly linked his brand to Saccone.

“The Economy is raging, at an all time high, and is set to get even better,” the president tweeted on Tuesday morning. “Jobs and wages up. Vote for Rick Saccone and keep it going!”

Republican campaign committees and super PACs spent \$10.7 million to help Saccone, more than five times as much as their Democratic rivals, according to Federal Election Commission records filed Monday night.

Thanks to the court’s scrambling of the congressional map, both Lamb and Saccone may well become candidates in new districts for the November midterm election before a winner is declared in this 18th Congressional District race. Candidates must collect and file 1,000 signatures for those races by March 20 — the day that some overseas ballots in Tuesday’s race will be counted.

The district, a stretch of suburbs and small towns that was drawn to elect a Republican, was not the sort of place that Democrats had been expected to make competitive this year. Lamb’s coalition pulled together suburban liberals, wayward Republicans and traditional Democrats who had drifted from the party on cultural issues.

The tight race added to Republican woes on a day that began with the surprise firing of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and a string of related dismissals. Republicans who hoped to fight the Pennsylvania race on the growing economy, and on the president’s new tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum, found the White House frequently alienating some of the voters they needed.

As voters made their decisions Tuesday, Trump loomed large in the minds of many.

Amelia Fletcher, a registered independent from Moon Township, cast her first-ever ballot for Saccone because she likes Trump’s agenda and believes he will support it.

“I really don’t appreciate how he talks, but I like what he’s doing now to help us out,” the 18-year-old high school senior said of Trump.

In Mt. Lebanon, Dave Banyan, 65, said that he had made up his mind on the race “as soon as President Trump was President Trump.” He said he did not want Democrats to get one vote closer to controlling the House of Representatives.

“I don’t want America to go back to the way it was” under President Barack Obama, said Banyan, a retired transportation worker. “Obamacare killed me. Dreamers — keep dreamin’, you know?”

However, several voters who said they were Republicans cast their ballots for Lamb — and against the president.

After casting her vote in Mt. Lebanon, a suburb of Pittsburgh, dental hygienist Janet Dellana said she had been outraged

to see Trump call for arming teachers instead of limiting access to semiautomatic weapons after the deadly school shooting in Florida.

“He flip-flops on everything, but in the end, he caters to the extreme right,” said Dellana, 64. “I am a registered Republican, but as this party continues to cater to the extreme right, they push me left.”

Tim Lacey, a 69-year-old registered Democrat, said Saccone’s support for Trump overcame any loyalty to the Republican, his fellow church member and a former customer of his construction business.

“I know Rick Saccone,” said Lacey, who lives in nearby Elizabeth Township. “He’s not a golfing buddy, but he’s a good man. But anyone who supports Trump isn’t for me.”

The district — which Saccone himself had called “Trump country” — had been the sort of place where Democrats struggled to compete. While registered Democrats slightly outnumbered registered Republicans, many of those Democrats bolted from their national party during Obama’s presidency.

In 2012, eight Democrats represented part of the district in the state legislature; after 2016, they were down to one. In 2014 and 2016, Democrats did not even bother to field a challenger to Tim Murphy, the Republican congressman whose resignation forced Tuesday’s special election.

They hoped, early on, that Lamb could change their fortunes. A first-time candidate from a storied local political family, the former Marine and federal prosecutor became a natural, if cautious, politician. He was personally antiabortion but opposed to new abortion restrictions; he supported the Second Amendment but favored stronger background checks.

Saccone, a four-term state legislator with a long military and academic résumé, struggled to unite the Trump or Murphy coalitions. Labor unions, with more than 80,000 members in the district, had sometimes endorsed Murphy. They united quickly against Saccone, a supporter of “right to work” legislation who did not bother to ask the state AFL-CIO for an endorsement.

On the ground, unions ran an aggressive turnout operation, winning back many members who had backed Trump for president. Lamb’s campaign focused on preserving Medicare and Social Security, and warning that Republican policies would put them at risk. The United Mine Workers of America, which had sat out the 2016 election, endorsed Lamb when the Democrat promised to support legislation that would fully fund their pensions.

That was one of several issues where Saccone never tried to meet or outflank Lamb. On Monday, as he campaigned at Canonsburg’s famous Sarris Candies with Trump Jr., Saccone dodged a question about the bill on miners’ pensions and accused a reporter who asked about it of talking to “liberals” instead of real miners.

It was not the only time that the Republican snapped at Democrats. At the second and final debate with Lamb, Saccone said his opponent didn’t “even know the difference between North and South Korea.” At his final rally, on Monday, Saccone said that “the other side” was gripped by a “hatred for our country” and a “hatred for God.”

But Saccone’s retail and TV ad campaigning was resoundingly positive, clashing with the negative ads that Republicans threw across the airwaves. Four groups spent more than \$1 million: the National Republican Congressional Committee (\$3.5 million), the Congressional Leadership Fund (\$3.4 million), the Republican National Committee (\$1.3 million) and America First Action (\$1.1 million).

Most of their ads were negative, portraying Lamb as a “puppet” of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), a foe of middle-class tax cuts, and eventually, as a prosecutor who had let drug dealers get light sentences.

Lamb blunted the impact of those attacks, most notably by saying in early January that he would not support Pelosi for

speaker. His highest-profile surrogate, former vice president Joe Biden, has enjoyed high approval ratings from all voters since passing on a 2016 presidential bid.

Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/congress/gina-haspel-trumps-cia-nominee-to-face-questions-on-torture>

Trump's CIA nominee will face questions on torture

By: Susan Ferrechio, 3/14/18

Senators and human rights groups are already planning to press President Trump's nominee to head the CIA about her role in approving enhanced interrogation techniques, just hours after Trump announced her pending nomination.

Many Republicans and Democrats said Tuesday they don't know much about Gina Haspel, who has spent more than three decades at the CIA and is now the deputy director.

But she has raised concern from key lawmakers, including Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., whose support could be critical in assuring her confirmation.

"Ms. Haspel needs to explain the nature and extent of her involvement in the CIA's interrogation program during the confirmation process," McCain said in a statement Tuesday. "I know the Senate will do its job in examining Ms. Haspel's record as well as her beliefs about torture and her approach to current law."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said he is not announcing his opposition to Haspel or Mike Pompeo, the current CIA Director who Trump has picked to serve as his new secretary of state.

But he's not backing them yet, either. Schumer said there are "lots of outstanding questions" about both nominees, and he's not taking a position yet.

Haspel, 61, drew opposition from human rights organizations when she was elevated to deputy director last year. They accused her of overseeing the secret prisons where suspected terrorists were questioned with "enhanced interrogation techniques," otherwise labeled as torture, during the Bush administration.

The advocacy group Human Rights First said they oppose her nomination.

"During Gina Haspel's long tenure at the CIA, she oversaw torture at a CIA blacksite during one of the bleakest points in our nation's history," said Raha Wala, the organization's director of national security advocacy. "No one who had a hand in torturing individuals deserves to ever hold public office again, let alone lead an agency. To allow someone who had a direct hand in this illegal, immoral, and counterproductive program is to willingly forget our nation's dark history with torture."

Christopher Anders, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said Haspel was "up to her eyeballs in torture" at the CIA and worked to destroy the evidence.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., who sits on the Senate Intelligence panel, said he needs to question Haspel to determine whether he would vote for her.

"I don't know much about her," Manchin said. When asked about her oversight of enhanced interrogation at the agency Manchin said, "We're going to be looking into that."

If confirmed, Haspel would become the first woman to ever head the CIA. She has many backers on Capitol Hill who say her role at the CIA has already been scrutinized by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., the former ranking member on the

panel. But Feinstein fought against Haspel's advancement under President Obama.

Haspel's ascension to deputy did not require a confirmation vote from the Senate or a hearing. Unlike Pompeo, she has never been officially vetted by the upper chamber.

She'll now face questions and a vote from the Senate Intelligence Committee and must then win a simple majority vote by the Senate. Republicans can approve her if they stick together, and so far, they seem to be.

It's not clear they will. Not only is McCain questioning Haspel's nomination, Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., announced he'll hold a press conference Wednesday to discuss both nominations.

A Paul spokesman declined to say whether the Senator is opposed to either nominee, but Paul voted against Pompeo's confirmation to head the CIA.

"I voted against the new CIA Director because I worry that his desire for security will trump his defense of liberty," Paul said at the time in an op-ed posted on Rare.com.

Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., told the Washington Examiner that Haspel is "imminently qualified" and deserves to be confirmed.

Sen. Jim Risch, R-Iowa, who as a member of the Intelligence Committee was deeply involved in the investigations into CIA torture, said he still backs Haspel to head the CIA.

"I sat through all those investigations," Risch told the Washington Examiner. "I don't have any issues with that."

Burr told the Washington Examiner that Haspel will be able to allay McCain's concerns by meeting with him. "She talked to Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Feinstein seemed satisfied with her conversations when she went in as deputy."

Feinstein, however, said Tuesday she has not made up her mind about confirming Haspel to head the CIA. Other Democrats said they would vote no.

"I voted against Mr. Pompeo's nomination to be CIA director because he failed to express moral opposition to torture," said Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a war veteran. "But Ms. Haspel has done much worse. Not only did she directly supervise the torture of detainees, but she also participated in covering it up by helping to destroy the video evidence. Her reprehensible actions should disqualify her from having the privilege of serving the American people in government ever again, but apparently this President believes they merit a promotion. I could not disagree more."

Trump Tweets



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 34m

Perhaps at no time in history have the business fundamentals of U.S. companies been better than they are today!

4.9K 3.1K 14K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 44m

Hundreds of good people, including very important Ambassadors and Judges, are being blocked and/or slow walked by the Democrats in the Senate. Many important positions in Government are unfilled because of this obstruction. Worst in U.S. history!

8.3K 5.6K 18K

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Wed 11/8/2017 7:28:58 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence, presented by INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION: How Grassley's reforms would change FARA — Bloom signs Molson Coors — Ellerbe joins Strategies 360

By Theodoric Meyer | 11/08/2017 02:27 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Aubree Eliza Weaver

HOW GRASSLEY'S REFORMS WOULD CHANGE FARA: Covington & Burling sent an advisory to clients on Tuesday outlining how the reforms to the Foreign Agents Registration Act proposed by Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) last week would affect them. The bill "would have a sweeping effect for a number of private sector companies," the firm writes. Foreign companies with U.S. subsidiaries would no longer be able to register under the less onerous rules of the Lobbying Disclosure Act and would instead have to register under FARA. "Second, an employee of a foreign company who traveled to the United States to engage the U.S. political system on a matter affecting a foreign business may trigger FARA. Finally, any U.S.-based lobbying, law, public relations, or consulting firm that provided services to individuals and companies abroad could trigger FARA."

- "Senator Grassley's legislation would also increase the frequency of disclosure reports required under FARA in certain circumstances," the firm writes. "Under current law, FARA disclosures are required every six months. For private sector entries, the Grassley legislation would increase the reporting requirement to every three months, consistent with the reporting requirements of the LDA, if the registrant is also registered under the LDA. ... Reporting every three months under FARA would create new and significant administrative burdens for private sector companies." **Here's the full advisory.**

- Has your firm done its own analysis of the bill? Let me know: tmeyer@politico.com.

BLOOM STRATEGIC COUNSEL SIGNS MOLSON COORS: Seth Bloom of Bloom Strategic Counsel has signed Molson Coors Brewing Company. He'll lobby for the brewing giant on "competition issues in the beer industry," according to a disclosure filing. Bloom appears to be the first outside lobbying firm Molson Coors has retained since 2009, when the company cut ties with **Davis & Harman**.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

**** Presented by INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION:** Bipartisan members of the House of Representatives have voted to save local franchise owners by passing the Save Local Business Act (H.R. 3441), which clarifies the legal definition of joint employer. Thousands of local franchise owners need clarity on joint employer so they can create more jobs. Learn more here <http://savelocalbusinesses.com/> **

ELLERBE TO STRATEGIES 360: Strategies 360 has added Crystal Ellerbe as vice president for federal relations. She previously worked as director of federal affairs for the

University of New Orleans and before that was a lobbyist for **Navistar**. She's an alumna of the offices of former Sens. **Frank Murkowski** (R-Alaska) and **David Vitter** (R-La.), who is now a lobbyist himself. Ellerbe has registered to lobby already for her first client, **WorldVu Development LLC for OneWeb**.

TAX REFORM UPDATE: "Senate Republicans plan to unveil a bill to rewrite the tax code that sharply diverges from the House GOP's plan, including by not fully repealing the estate tax," **POLITICO's Seung Min Kim** and **Josh Dawsey** report. "GOP leaders will brief the conference on the details of their long-awaited tax overhaul legislation on Thursday morning at 11:30 a.m. in the Strom Thurmond room at the Capitol, according to two sources. ... The plan is expected to have significant differences from the House legislation. For instance, the Senate plans to ax the state and local tax deduction - which will deeply disappoint House Republicans from high-tax blue states - in their bill, according to multiple sources familiar with the measure." [Full story.](#)

- How will Republicans' poor showing in Virginia and other states last night affect tax reform? Senate Finance Chairman **Orrin Hatch** (R-Utah) told **The Washington Post's Mike DeBonis** "the losses could shape the tax bill going forward. 'It could,' he said in a brief morning interview. 'I mean, it could, because the elections went against the Republicans.' Asked if he is feeling pressure to tilt the tax plan more toward the middle class, Hatch said, 'I think we've been moving that way anyway.'" [Full story.](#)

- Tax lobbyists, meanwhile, are feeling the pressure in the rush to press Republicans on the House Ways and Means Committee to include the changes their clients are demanding. "It's a frenzy, there are literally not enough hours in the day to have the discussions anybody who wants to make a change needs to have," one Republican lobbyist told **The Hill's Megan Wilson**. [Full story.](#)

PRIEBUS: 'I'M NOT A LOBBYIST': Freed from his job as President **Donald Trump's** chief of staff, **Reince Priebus** has returned to his old law firm and is giving private speeches about his old boss at \$50,000 a pop, **POLITICO's Josh Dawsey** and **Matthew Nussbaum** report. But he wants to make one thing clear. "'I'm not a lobbyist,' Priebus said in a recent interview, when asked if he is part of the 'swamp.' 'I'm not selling access. I'm merely providing strategic advice and helping them handle their problems.' He stays involved at the RNC keeping close tabs on donors and members - allies say he was obsessed with operations even while in the White House. He is planning to start doing more TV hits. He'd like to launch a super PAC or become involved in one." [Full story.](#)

SPOTTED: At a reception thrown by the Alaskan telecommunications provider **GCI** at the **NCTA's** offices Tuesday night commemorating the completion of their new rural broadband network, according to a PI tipster: Sens. **Lisa Murkowski** and **Dan Sullivan**, both Alaska Republicans; Reps. **Don Young** (R-Alaska) and **Patrick McHenry** (R-N.C.); **Nick Hanson** of "American Ninja Warrior"; **Greg Chapados**, **Tina Pidgeon**, **Meg Baldino** and **Heather Handyside** of **GCI**; **Michael Powell** of **NCTA**; **Tina Pelkey** of the **FCC**; **Mike Dubke**, **Carl Forti** and **Chris Maloney** of the **Black Rock Group**; **Mike Pawlowski** of **Murkowski's** office; and **Larry Burton** and **Robyn Engibous** of **Sullivan's** office.

- Lunching at Tosca on Tuesday, according to a PI tipster: **Jack Oliver**, a veteran of **George W. Bush's** campaigns who's now a senior policy adviser at **Bryan Cave**, and **Broderick Johnson**, who rejoined Bryan Cave this year after working in former President **Barack Obama's** White House.

What Actually Did Happen? 365 days later, POLITICO Editor Carrie Budoff Brown looks at Election Day 2016 through the perspectives of five women who worked for different presidential candidates. In this exclusive POLITICO Women Rule podcast, Symone D. Sanders, Pam Bondi, Jennifer Palmieri, Catherine Frazier and Jessica Ennis share their experiences, memories and takeaways from inside the campaigns and outline what they think the next woman who runs for president needs to do to win. **Tune in HERE.**

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Keep El Paso Honest (Unknown)
Liberty Rising (Super PAC)
Together For Change (Super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Bloom Strategic Counsel: Molson Coors Brewing Company
Bockorny Group Inc.: Uzurv
Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP: One Stop Environmental LLC
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP): Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Dentons US LLP: Barron Collier Companies
J M Burkman & Associates: Restore Cryotherapy Mountain West
Mercury: AAR Corp.
ML Strategies LLC: UnityPoint Health
U.S. Government Relations Intl.: IOSTIA International Ocean Science and Technology Industry Association

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Anderson Indian Law: Muscogee Creek Nation, Office of the Principle Chief [sic]
Martin Frost Consulting: Domestic Energy Producers Alliance

**** Sponsored by INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION:** Bipartisan members of the House of Representatives have voted to save local franchise owners by passing the Save Local Business Act (H.R. 3441), which clarifies the legal definition of joint employer. Thousands of local franchise owners need clarity on joint employer, so they can open additional locations and create more jobs. Learn more here <http://savelocalbusinesses.com/> **

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 7/21/2017 10:44:06 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the National Retail Federation: TRUMP TEAM: investigating the investigators, discussing potential pardons -- KASOWITZ, CORALLO OUT -- BANNON'S DISAPPEARING ACT -- Scaramucci up for WH comms job -- B'DAY: Mick Mulvaney is...

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the National Retail Federation
07/21/2017 06:41 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Friday morning. WHAT YOUR WHITE HOUSE IS UP TO -- "Trump Aides, Seeking Leverage, Investigate Mueller's Investigators," by NYT's Mike Schmidt, Maggie Haberman and Matt Apuzzo: "President Trump's lawyers and aides are scouring the professional and political backgrounds of investigators hired by the special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, looking for conflicts of interest they could use to discredit the investigation - or even build a case to fire Mr. Mueller or get some members of his team recused, according to three people with knowledge of the research effort. The search for potential conflicts is wide-ranging. It includes scrutinizing donations to Democratic candidates, investigators' past clients and Mr. Mueller's relationship with James B. Comey, whose firing as F.B.I. director is part of the special counsel's investigation." <http://nyti.ms/2tM6iWQ>

AP'S JULIE PACE: "Attorney Jay Sekulow, a member of the president's external legal team, told The Associated Press that the lawyers 'will consistently evaluate the issue of conflicts and raise them in the appropriate venue.'" <http://bit.ly/2tw2xtk>

FOUR BYLINES -- CAROL LEONNIG, ASHLEY PARKER, ROZ HELDERMAN and TOM HAMBURGER: "Trump team seeks to control, block Mueller's Russia investigation": "Some of President Trump's lawyers are exploring ways to limit or undercut special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's Russia investigation, building a case against what they allege are his conflicts of interest and discussing the president's authority to grant pardons, according to people familiar with the effort. Trump has asked his advisers about his power to pardon aides, family members and even himself in connection with the probe, according to one of those people. A second person said Trump's lawyers have been discussing the president's pardoning powers among

themselves. Trump's legal team declined to comment on the issue. But one adviser said the president has simply expressed a curiosity in understanding the reach of his pardoning authority, as well as the limits of Mueller's investigation.

"Further adding to the challenges facing Trump's outside lawyers, the team's spokesman, Mark Corallo, resigned on Thursday, according to two people familiar with his departure. Corallo did not respond to immediate requests for comment."

<http://wapo.st/2uHVmxP>

-- **@EricHolder:** "There is NO basis to question the integrity of Mueller or those serving with him in the special counsel's office. And no conflicts either".

CLIP AND SAVE -- @MajorCBS: "Via @JaySekulow 'Pardons are not being discussed and are not on the table.' @realDonaldTrump #legalteam".

-- **"Special Counsel Investigating Possible Money Laundering by Paul Manafort,"** by WSJ's Erica Orden: "The inquiry into the issue by Mr. Mueller, a former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and his team began several weeks ago."

<http://on.wsj.com/2tvOYu2>

REAL WORLD IMPLICATIONS -- "Trump's public Russia comments could cause legal headaches for him-and his kids," by Darren Samuelsohn and Josh Dawsey:

"President Donald Trump's decision to talk off the cuff about the Russia probe to reporters allowed him to put out his version of events-but increased the legal risks to him, as well as to his children and the growing number of associates who have been pulled into the expanding investigation. Every public statement by the president or others involved opens a line of questioning for special counsel Robert Mueller or lawmakers exploring the contacts between Trump associates and Russia during the 2016 election. Like the president's tweets, his interviews can be used to establish facts or intent, offering investigators a gold mine of information but potentially creating conflicts for others that can lead to headaches for their various lawyers-or to criminal charges including perjury or obstruction of justice." <http://politi.co/2voOgMk>

REMEMBER HIM? -- "Steve Bannon's disappearing act," by Eliana Johnson and Annie Karni: "Steve Bannon has largely disappeared from the White House's most sensitive policy debates - a dramatic about-face for an operative once characterized as the most powerful man in Washington. Bannon, chastened by internal rivalries and by President Donald Trump's growing suspicion that he is looking out for his own interests, is in a self-imposed exile, having chosen to step back from Trump's inner circle for the sake of self-preservation, according to several White House advisers who spoke to POLITICO on the condition of anonymity to avoid angering a colleague.

"He was absent from Trump's recent trips to Europe for the G-20 summit and from his visit French president Emmanuel Macron. Bannon's non-attendance is all the more noteworthy given his interest in European history and politics, particularly his antipathy to the European Union. And while Trump's rousing call in Warsaw for the defense of

Western civilization echoed the populist ideology Bannon promoted as chief of the right-wing website Breitbart News, two senior White House aides said that Bannon had no hand in crafting Trump's populist address. He did not participate in administration conference calls planning the remarks, they say, which were largely written by chief speechwriter Stephen Miller, national security adviser H.R. McMaster and NSC communications aide Michael Anton." <http://politi.co/2uPmA6v>

W.H. REVOLVING DOOR -- "Scaramucci under consideration for White House communications post," by Josh Dawsey (who wrote seven separate stories yesterday!): "Anthony Scaramucci, a Wall Street financier and longtime supporter of President Donald Trump, has been engaged in talks to join the White House communications shop, two White House officials said. Scaramucci, who is a frequent TV surrogate for Trump, is liked by the president. Trump 'thinks he is really good at making the case for him,' one of these people said. 'He loves him on TV.'

"Scaramucci would enter the communications operation in a high-level role, but the specifics have not been determined - nor when he would begin. One of the White House officials cautioned the talks could still fall part. The other person said Scaramucci would be involved heavily in the TV part of the operation. Scaramucci didn't respond to multiple requests for comment." <http://politi.co/2gPfmJw>

-- SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, Scaramucci has been floated for the following roles: a Valerie Jarrett-like liaison role with the business community, ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, senior vice president and chief strategy officer at the Export-Import Bank and now communications director at the White House.

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** {Video} From front-line cashier to running a company, America's Retail Champion Trudy Trombley knows the opportunity that lies within retail. So do her fellow Vermont retailers. [Watch their story.](#)

OUT -- CBS'S MAJOR GARRETT: "Marc Kasowitz and Mark Corallo depart Trump's legal team": "Marc Kasowitz is out as Mr. Trump's personal attorney, CBS News chief White House correspondent Major Garrett reports. And Kasowitz's spokesman, Mark Corallo, has resigned, Garrett says. The reasons for the moves were not immediately known. Kasowitz has represented Mr. Trump since the early 2000s, and led his defense in the Trump University fraud case." <http://cbsn.ws/2tNieYw>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "U.S. general says allies worry Russian war game may be 'Trojan horse'," by Reuters' Andrea Shalal in Berlin: "U.S. allies in eastern Europe and Ukraine are worried that Russia's planned war games in September could be a 'Trojan horse' aimed at leaving behind military equipment brought into Belarus, the U.S. Army's top general in Europe said on Thursday. Russia has sought to reassure NATO that the military exercises will respect international limits on size, but NATO and U.S. official remain wary about their scale and scope." <http://reut.rs/2uPfOO2>

SENATE WATCH -- "Under fire for opposing health bill, Mike Lee hits back," by Burgess Everett and Jen Haberkorn: "Mike Lee hears the chorus of critics, with blame from the establishment wing of the GOP cascading on the Utah senator for being the Republican that stopped Obamacare repeal. And he's ready to respond. In an interview in his Capitol Hill office Thursday, Lee said he was willing to be the lone senator to bring down his party's health care bill because it did not do much to stop Obamacare in its tracks. 'I'm not being an absolutist,' he said, adding that he didn't need 100 percent of the law to be repealed. 'I'm a little frustrated by some who are eager and willing to call me out for saying this doesn't go far enough in doing what we promised to do for seven years.'

"A second-term conservative senator from the party's libertarian-leaning wing, Lee has always been somewhat of an outlier in the conference. But he's not going to keep quiet as the criticism flies his way. A cohort of Republicans from the center-right are bearing down on Lee as the main cause of the GOP's recent dysfunction -- even though Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) jumped with Lee on Monday in coming out against Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's plan to repeal and replace the health law." <http://politi.co/2uHYRUK>

-- "McCain's absence leaves big hole in Senate," by John Bresnahan and Seung Min Kim: "McCain's sudden departure leaves a giant hole in the middle of Republican conference. On defense and foreign policy issues, McCain is among the loudest GOP voices, largely based on his own experience as a Vietnam War hero and prisoner of war. A hawkish interventionist utterly convinced of America's undisputed place as the world's leader, McCain has pushed to expand the U.S.'s presence overseas, not withdraw from it, which often put him in collision with the Trumpian-Bannon worldview.

"From Syria to ISIS to Iran to North Korea, McCain has pushed for hardline U.S. policies, including military strikes if necessary. On other controversial topics -- Trump's behavior, immigration, treatment of terrorism detainees, torture -- McCain has been one of the few Republicans willing to speak out. Due to his own stature, McCain has been able to say what others Republicans can't or won't." <http://politi.co/2uNDzGd>

NYT'S CARL HULSE: "The circumstances are eerily similar. In the middle of contentious health care deliberations, a larger-than-life figure in the Senate learns he has a very serious form of brain cancer. A leading voice goes quiet and the Senate suffers for it. Such was the case in 2008 when Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, learned he had brain cancer and again this week when it was announced that John McCain, Republican of Arizona, had the exact condition that claimed his colleague -- a man who shared Mr. McCain's zest for a good argument and for cutting a deal." <http://nyti.ms/2tMldQU>

-- @chrisjohnson82: ".@kwelkernbc asks Sarah Sanders if POTUS regrets denying McCain is a war hero. Reply: 'I'm not sure about that,' adds POTUS has well wishes."

TRUMP INC. -- BUZZFEED'S JEREMY SINGER-VINE, JESSICA GARRISON and KEN BENSINGER: "Mar-A-Lago, Donald Trump's private club that he calls the Winter White House, is asking the government for permission to hire 70 temporary foreign workers as cooks, servers, and housekeepers, according to records posted by the Department of Labor on Thursday. The nearby Trump National Golf Club, Jupiter, has requested permission to hire an additional six foreign cooks.

"Trump has frequently urged US companies to hire American workers -- a theme highlighted this week in what the Trump administration has dubbed 'Made in America' week. But for his own Mar-A-Lago club, he has also defended hiring foreign workers by saying that it is 'very, very hard to get help' during the Florida tourist season."

<http://bzfd.it/2uG2gny>

HMM -- "Interior Dept. ordered Glacier park chief, other climate expert pulled from Zuckerberg tour," by WaPo's Lisa Rein: "Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg flew to Glacier National Park on Saturday to tour the melting ice fields that have become the poster child for climate change's effects on Montana's northern Rockies. But days before the tech tycoon's visit, the Trump administration abruptly removed two of the park's top climate experts from a delegation scheduled to show him around, telling a research ecologist and the park superintendent that they were no longer going to participate in the tour. ... It capped days of internal discussions - including conference calls and multiple emails - among top Interior Department and Park Service officials about how much the park should roll out the welcome mat for Zuckerberg, who with the broader tech community in Silicon Valley has positioned himself as a vocal critic of President Trump, particularly of his withdrawal from the Paris climate accord."

<http://wapo.st/2tlBzR5>

BIG DEAL -- "Israel limits Muslim access to Jerusalem site amid tensions," by AP's Ian Deitch and Mohammed Daraghmeh in Jerusalem: "Israel banned Muslim men under the age of 50 from a contested Jerusalem shrine Friday and deployed about 3,000 police nearby, ahead of expected Muslim protests over the installation of metal detectors at the holy site. The age restrictions and police deployment came hours after Israel's security Cabinet decided not to overrule an earlier police decision to install metal detectors at the gates to the walled compound. The volatile Jerusalem shrine, revered by Muslims and Jews, sits at the center of rival Israeli and Palestinian national narratives and has triggered major confrontations in the past." <http://bit.ly/2tlEgCj>

THE JUICE ...

-- SPOTTED LAST NIGHT AT TRUMP HOTEL: Lara Trump celebrating Trump campaign spokeswoman Katrina Pierson's birthday with several former other campaign staffers and Trump loyalists, including Kelly Love, Victoria Barton, Scott Mason and Tommy Hicks.

-- THE DOUGH: THE RNC raised \$13 million in June. **PAUL SINGER** gave \$71,100 to the NRCC.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump uses a machine to attempt to crush a newly designed pharmaceutical glass bottle alongside Corning Chairman and CEO Wendell Weeks during a "Made in America Week" event in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on July 20. | Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images

WHAT BEN CARSON IS SAYING THESE DAYS - per the Washington Examiner's Sarah Westwood and Al Weaver: "'Let me put it this way,' Carson told the Washington Examiner in an interview on Wednesday, 'I'm glad that Trump is drawing all the fire so I can get stuff done.'" <http://washex.am/2ul4x15>

PAUL RYAN on TAX REFORM, per the Boston Globe's Jim O'Sullivan: "'As Republicans, we are wired the same way on tax reform,' Ryan told reporters. 'Obviously, we've seen in the Senate there are a difference of opinions on how to do health care reform. We are so much more unified on tax reform, on what it looks like, and how to do it, and the need to do it.' ...

"[R]yan waved off 'the cynical talk in Washington,' arguing, 'Despite everything we've seen in Washington, don't fall for it.'" <http://bit.ly/2gPwwqI>

MAIN JUSTICE -- "Sessions won't resign for now, but gets Trump's message," by Josh Gerstein, Josh Dawsey and Eliana Johnson: A "senior administration official said Trump has rarely spoken to Sessions in recent months and had no immediate plan to see him - and added that Sessions is not as often in the West Wing huddling with Trump or other top aides, like Stephen Miller, who worked for Sessions in the Senate before joining the Trump campaign. Sessions still talks to Miller, chief White House lawyer Don McGahn and Rick Dearborn, a longtime Senate aide who joined the administration. Having the tensions with the president of the United States spill out in public as they did Wednesday created the prospect of a zombie attorney general-going through the motions of the office, while lacking any real connection to or support from the president and the White House. ...

"One former official said Trump's effort to undercut Sessions may have actually strengthened his hand in the department. 'Actually, I believe that Sessions determination to stay on as attorney general in the face of Trump's criticisms has likely enhanced his reputation within the Department of Justice,' said former acting Solicitor General Walter Dellinger. 'This is a strange world in which criticism by this particular president is not damaging.'" <http://politi.co/2vqBk8M>

-- **@SariHorwitz:** "Fun fact: Sessions arrives at DOJ every day at 6 a.m., heats a bowl of oatmeal in a microwave & works out on a treadmill before 1st meeting."

-- **Rick Dearborn's wife Gina** posted this picture and message on Facebook yesterday

"THE MAN with the man. What a privilege to have the U.S. Attorney General in our home for dinner. We are lucky to call him friend and the country is lucky to have him as AG. Missed Mary Sessions." ***Rick worked for Sessions in the Senate. Pic***
<http://bit.ly/2gPolEW>

FIGHT! -- "U.S. and Exxon Spar Over Russia Sanctions Violation: Treasury cites energy giant's dealings with Russian oil executive in notice for \$2 million fine; the company says it will challenge findings," by WSJ's Samuel Rubinfeld, Lynn Cook and Ian Talley: "The U.S. Treasury Department on Thursday imposed a \$2 million fine on Exxon Mobil Corp. for what it called a 'reckless disregard' of U.S. sanctions on Russia while Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was the oil giant's chief executive, a finding the company immediately said it would challenge.

"Exxon, under Mr. Tillerson, in early 2014 deepened the company's longstanding partnership with the Kremlin despite Washington levying sanctions against Russia for annexing Crimea and supporting pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine. In May of that year, the Treasury Department said the company signed eight documents relating to oil and gas projects in Russia that were also signed by Igor Sechin, chief executive of the state oil giant PAO Rosneft. The Treasury said Thursday those deals violated U.S. sanctions against Mr. Sechin, a former Russian intelligence officer and ally to President Vladimir Putin." <http://on.wsj.com/2uG4enX>

BLAST FROM THE PAST -- "O.J.'s last defender - F. Lee Bailey - is broke, disbarred and working above a hair salon," by WaPo's Michael Rosenwald: "Johnnie Cochran is dead. Marcia Clark writes murder mysteries. Judge Lance Ito is retired. Kato Kaelin tweets a lot. And F. Lee Bailey, the famed criminal defense attorney, is flat broke.... Last year, Bailey filed for bankruptcy after a string of scandals inside and outside the courtroom left him disbarred and shamed. He was accused of misappropriating funds from his defense of an alleged drug dealer."
<http://wapo.st/2uPcK4D>

POLITICO MAGAZINE's "WHAT WORKS": "How San Francisco Saved Its Public Housing By Getting Rid of It," by Ethan Epstein. <http://politi.co/2tvYyNk>

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** The overwhelming majority of retailers are small businesses, with more than 98% of all retail companies employing fewer than 50 people. While small in size, their voices are loud and clear when fighting to be heard on decisions and policies that impact their businesses and the customers they serve every day. [Hear more industry stories on NRF's Retail Gets Real podcast.](#)

MEDIAWATCH -- "Fox News turns to Hillary Clinton amid negative news for Trump," by CNN's Oliver Darcy: "As a cloud of negative news hangs over President Donald Trump and his administration, a familiar face has been all over the airwaves on Fox News: Hillary Clinton. The former Democratic presidential candidate, a favorite villain of the right, has been featured prominently across Fox News' programming this

week. In many cases, instead of the network's hosts applying pressure to the current President, who is grappling with the fallout from a federal investigation related to Russian election meddling, Fox News' personalities have deflected and turned their attention to Clinton." <http://cnnmon.ie/2vqAXuU>

-- **"Is Everyone in Politics Writing a Tell-all? Yes,"** by Concepcion De Leon in the NYT -- featuring details about what to expect from upcoming books from Hillary Clinton, Eric Holder, Valerie Jarrett, John Kerry, David Litt, Jeremy Bernard and Lea Berman, Arne Duncan, Pete Souza, Amanda Lucidon, Beck Dorey-Stein, Pat Cunnane, James Clapper, Corey Lewandowski, Donna Brazile, Ivana Trump, Katy Tur, Amy Chozick, Laura Ingraham, Mark Halperin and John Heilemann, Edward Klein, Keith Olbermann, Ben Bradlee Jr., E.J. Dionne, Norman Ornstein and Thomas Mann, James Poniewozik, Kayleigh McEnany, Naomi Klein, David Frum: <http://nyti.ms/2uFsh6k>

- **NEW PODCAST** from The Atlantic: "Today The Atlantic premieres 'Radio Atlantic,' the flagship show on its new podcast platform. Co-hosted by editor in chief Jeffrey Goldberg, executive editor Matt Thompson, and contributing editor Alex Wagner, the new weekly show will draw upon The Atlantic's 160 years of history, combined with the perspective of today's sharpest journalists, to interpret the news as it happens. Each episode will hone in on a theme and incorporate a revolving cast of voices from The Atlantic's masthead and beyond." <http://theatlantic.com/podcast/2vHxE1K>

HOLLYWOODLAND - "She's Back?! Nikki Finke Poised to Return to Deadline Hollywood as Columnist," by TheWrap's Tony Maglio and Matt Donnelly: "Nikki Finke is poised to return to Deadline Hollywood as a columnist as soon as September, TheWrap has learned exclusively. Over the last few weeks, Finke has been telling executives around Hollywood that she is coming back to the entertainment trade website that she founded in March 2006 and from which she was notoriously fired in 2013." <http://bit.ly/2tvQfRC>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Angus King on the American flight from DCA to Portland Thursday night ... EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in first class on the last Delta flight from Atlanta to DCA. A tipster writes: "A woman sitting behind him gave him a respectful earful of her opinion about him and the Trump administration's environmental policy. He responded with a polite smile, small talk and thank you."

OUT AND ABOUT -- SPOTTED last night at the Newseum for the launch of Alisyn Camerota's book, "Amanda Wakes Up": party hosts Dana Bash, Juleanna Glover, Tammy Haddad, Daniella Landau, Megan Murphy, Ana Navarro and Hilary Rosen, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) and his son, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Valerie Jarrett, Chris Cillizza, Steve Hilton, Carol Melton, Tom Forrest, Carl Hulse, Katie Hinson, Rachel Pearson, Rob Flynn, Robin Goldman, Gloria Borger, Victoria Espinel, David Chalian,

David Gelles, Betsy Klein, Kevin Cirilli, Ashley Killough, Laura Jarrett, Craig Gordon, Jeff Zeleny, Robert Draper and Kirsten Powers, Kate Bennett, Katie Hinman, Lauren Pratapas, Jackie Kucinich, ***Proceeds from the book go to the Committee to Protect Journalists -- \$17.68 on Amazon*** <http://amzn.to/2vqB3Tr>

SPOTTED at Targeted Victory's party last night at Stanton & Greene celebrating Alex Schriver and Alberto Martinez: Lenny Alcivar, Zac Moffatt, Ryan Meerstein, Abe Adams, Connie Partoyan, Chris Hansen, Molly Donilon, Brendon DeToro, Billy McBeath, Zeke Miller, Jonathan Swan, Eli Yokley, Daniel Kroese, Chad Carlough, Ben Falkowski, Megan Cummings, Matt Hoekstra, Billy Godoy, Amos Snead, Gina Rigby, Warren Tryon, Matt Weinstein, Mike House, Dean Hingson, Sam Marchio, Fritz Brogan, Rosario Palmieri, Alex Burgos.

-- **MIKE MEMOLI** celebrated his move from the L.A. Times to NBC last night.

SPOTTED: Nick Kalman, Zeke Miller, Sean Spicer, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Abby Livingston, Hallie Jackson, Scott Mulhauser, Sasha Issenberg, Liz Allen and Ben Finkenbinder.

-- **Columbia Books and Information Services** and the Almanac of American Politics hosted a dinner at the University Club last night honoring Bridget Kendall, ex-BBC Washington correspondent and first Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge College.

SPOTTED: Rich Cohen, Paul Kane, Michael Barone, Charlie Mahtesian, Lou Jacobson, Aaron Zitner, Matthew Barnes, Bob Merry and Joel Poznansky.

TRANSITIONS - TOM LOPACH, former executive director of the DSCC most recently at Subject Matter, is moving back to Helena, Montana, to be the chief of staff to Montana Gov. Steve Bullock. <http://bit.ly/2vqCZLq> ... Smoot Tewes Group has added three new partners and a new CFO. **Dan Kanninen, Shoren Brown, and Aaron Wells** are joining co-founders Julianna Smoot and Paul Tewes as partners in the firm, and **Sabrina Neal** has been named the firm's CFO. <http://bit.ly/2twajUb>

SUNDAY SO FAR -- "Fox News Sunday": Sen. John Thune (R-SD). Panel: Jason Chaffetz, Julie Pace, Gillian Turner, Juan Williams

-- **CBS' "Face the Nation":** Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) ... Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) Political panel: Dan Balz, Jamelle Bouie, Megan McArdle, and Amy Walter

-- **ABC's "This Week":** Eric Bolling, Joshua Green, Sara Fagen, Maggie Haberman, Roland Martin

-- **NBC's "Meet the Press"** is not on due to The Open Championship

-- **CNN's "State of the Union":** Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) ... Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.). Panel: Mary Katharine Ham, former Gov. Jennifer Granholm, former Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), Karine Jean-Pierre

-- **CNN's "Inside Politics":** Michael Shear, Molly Ball, Nia-Malika Henderson, Julie Hirschfeld Davis

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Aaron Renn, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research and a contributing editor at its quarterly magazine City Journal, and **Katy J. Renn**, former executive director of Renew Indianapolis, the land bank of the city of Indianapolis, email friends and family: "Alexander Marcus Renn (aka AMR2) was born [Wednesday] @ 3:29 p.m., 7lbs 8oz. Katy and baby are doing great. Baby Alex was apparently in a hurry to get here, as he was born exactly nine months and one day after Katy and I were married." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2u17wqn>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Nation multimedia editor Frank Reynolds, who celebrated with the publication of a new animated short that juxtaposes life under social democracy vs. free market capitalism: "People in Denmark Are a Lot Happier Than People in the United States. Here's Why": <http://bit.ly/2uPoKTA> (hat tip: Caitlin Graf)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Mark Preston, executive director of CNN political programming and senior political analyst. How he's celebrating: "Breaking News: I don't enjoy celebrating my birthday (For those who know me, this shouldn't be a surprise). But my children enjoy a good birthday party, ice cream and chocolate cake - so I will be 'celebrating' this historic day with my family on a little island just off the East Coast ... far, far away from DC." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2gP8Zpx>

BIRTHDAYS: OMB director Mick Mulvaney is 5-0 ... Bob Shrum ... Google's Ali-jae Henke ... CT Gov. Dan Malloy ... Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), EPW and RPC Chairman (h/t Arjun Mody) ... Michelle Young ... Ford Motor Company's Christin Tinsworth Baker ... Billy Schuette ... Steve Lerch ... Nancy LeaMond of AARP (hat tip: son Colin) ... Blaire Luciano Constable ... Dale "Duke" Schuurman ... Gary Crider ... Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.) ... Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.) ... Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) ... former Rep. Ed Towns (D-N.Y.) ... John Negroponte ... CNN's Teddy Davis ... Rachel Davis ... Obama WH alum Jessica Menter ... Stacey Moreau Tank, chief comms officer at Home Depot ... Phyllis Rubin ... Dave Noble ... Pip Deely ... Fox News' Peter Doocy ... Amanda K. Ruisi ... Garrett Ventry of CRC Public Relations ... Katie Gillen in Rep. Julia Brownley's office (h/t Sam Greene) ... Michael Sessums, managing director for public affairs and crisis at Burson-Marsteller, former Foreign Service officer, the pride of Tampa, and a huge Nats fan (h/t Ben Chang) ...

... **Jahan Wilcox**, strategic comms adviser at EPA (h/ts Colin Reed and Caitlin Conant) ... Jen Corey Baca (h/ts Joshua Baca and Patrick Garrigan) ... Matt Tully ... Ron Colburn ... Otto Heck ... Adam Kroczaleski, who works in Rep. John Moolenaar's Midland, Mich. office (h/t Aaron Baylis) ... Amanda Carey ... Jen Bluestein ... Doug Mellgren ... Amanda Elliott ... Democratic operative Greg Richardson ... Patty Morneault Richter ... Trita Parsi, founder and president of the National Iranian American Council ... Theresa Vawter ... Gen. Dick Tubb ... Carrie Simms ... Travis Thomas ... Wendy Wilkinson ... Meaghan Wolff ... David Stacy ... Lisa Neubauer (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** The overwhelming majority of retailers are small businesses, with more than 98% of all retail companies employing fewer than 50 people. While small in size, their voices are loud and clear when fighting to be heard on decisions and policies that impact their businesses and the customers they serve every day. Hear more industry stories on NRF's Retail Gets Real podcast.

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THE SEPTEMBER 8 EDITION OF THE "THE TAKEOUT:" RNC CHAIR RONNA MCDANIEL SIDES WITH TRUMP ON DEBT CEILING DEAL

In today's episode of "The Takeout," CBS News Chief White House Correspondent Major Garrett and CBS News Political Director Steve Chaggaris sit down with Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel.

Listen and subscribe on iTunes [here](#) and read more on "[The Takeout](#)" [website](#) and below:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/rnc-chair-ronna-mcdaniel-sides-with-trump-on-debt-ceiling-deal/>

CBS News
RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel sides with Trump on debt ceiling deal
By Steve Chaggaris

While many congressional Republicans are livid at President Trump's unexpected debt-ceiling deal with Democratic leaders, one key Republican is arguing that this effort at bipartisanship is what Americans want.

"I channel the middle of the country where I come from," Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, who hails from Michigan, told "[The Takeout](#)" podcast this week. "They're looking at Washington saying, 'Give us some solutions. I don't care how you do it, let's be pragmatic. If you have to work across party lines, if it's in the best interest of the American people, get it done.'

"And that's what the president's bringing. And so he's going to work with Republicans, he's going to work with Democrats. That's a good thing," McDaniel said.

Earlier this week, President Trump forged a [surprise agreement](#) with Democratic leaders to pass a first tranche of aid for the [Hurricane Harvey relief effort](#), along with a three-month extension of the debt limit and a short-term government spending bill. It was a move that left Republican leadership

dumbfounded. Shortly before Mr. Trump's meeting with congressional leaders, House Speaker Paul Ryan had disparaged the Democrats' short-term proposal, calling it a "ridiculous idea."

One congressional aide described the meeting this way: "Republican leaders pushed for [an] 18-month debt limit hike, then floated 6 months. [Rep. Nancy] Pelosi and [Sen. Charles] Schumer dismissed 6-month hike. Trump then agreed to the 3-month hike that Democrats put on the table."

But McDaniel brushed aside any criticism of Mr. Trump's deal with Democrats, arguing that "if he doesn't work with Democrats, he's too partisan. And if he works with Democrats, he's too bipartisan. I mean, he can't win."

"At the end of the day, the president wants to work with anybody who's working with the American people to get the job done."

For more with McDaniel's conversation with CBS News Chief White House Correspondent Major Garrett and Political Director Steve Chaggaris, including her thoughts about next year's midterm elections, her party's policy agenda, and her famous maiden name (Romney), download "The Takeout" podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher, or Spotify. New episodes are available every Friday morning.

Also, you can watch "The Takeout" on CBSN Friday and Saturday nights at 9pm ET/PT. For a full archive of "The Takeout" episodes, visit www.takeoutpodcast.com.

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03/27/2018 07:58 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

CENSUS CITIZENSHIP QUESTION COULD IMPACT CONGRESSIONAL

DISTRICTS -- Democrats are already threatening to sue following the Commerce Department's announcement late Monday that it will include a controversial question about citizenship status on the 2020 Census. "Critics have warned the administration against including the question because they fear it would result in a massive drop in response rates from immigrants who worry the information could be used to deport them," Brent D. Griffiths and Andrew Restuccia report. "Experts worry that a drop in participation would result in an inaccurate count of the full U.S. population, which could have massive ramifications for everything from how federal funds are distributed to how congressional districts are redrawn."

The department says the data will "permit more effective enforcement" of the Voting Rights Act. "In a letter discussing the decision, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said he took a 'hard look' at the Department of Justice's request as part of a review that included an examination of any possible legal issues associated with asking about citizenship," they write. "The secretary said the department also reviewed concerns about lower participation due to inclusion of the question, but ultimately was not swayed by the arguments." Eleven Democrats have co-sponsored a bill by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) that would prohibit Census questions regarding citizenship and immigration status. The Census Bureau has until Saturday to provide Congress with the final wording of its Census questionnaire. More: <https://politi.co/2Ggfjyo>

THE 2018 MID-TRUMP ELECTIONS -- Republicans are increasingly worried that they could incur more midterm losses than they envisioned as the November elections shape up to become a referendum on Trump. "Polls and every recent election show that Mr. Trump has galvanized liberal and moderate voters -- especially women and those with college degrees -- to oppose his party," The New York Times' Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns report. "Yet at the same time, personal loyalty to the president is increasingly the most crucial litmus test for Republicans. This widening chasm has created a dilemma for Republicans, especially in liberal and swing states."

"If they stay faithful to Mr. Trump they risk incurring the wrath of many in the political center during the general election, likely dooming their campaigns," the two write. "But if they disavow the president, they risk depressing turnout from their core Republican voters and watching their pool of volunteers evaporate overnight. ... And perhaps most ominous for Republicans, there does not appear to be an obvious middle ground."

Democrats say their liabilities pale in comparison to Republicans' in the Trump era. As

Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-La.) put it, "I don't see headlines with: 'Porn star sues Nancy Pelosi.'" "Just as gun control has put many Republican candidates on the defensive after Saturday's student-led demonstrations," they continue, "Mr. Trump's behavior is increasingly backing candidates into a corner." More: <https://nyti.ms/2GgYy6x>

Related: "Suburban voters angry with Trump threaten GOP's grip on House," by The Washington Post's Kari Lydersen and Michael Scherer: <https://wapo.st/2I8bfRg>

ANOTHER GOP DISASTER? -- Following this month's loss in a Pennsylvania district the president won by 20 points in 2016, national Republicans are funneling hundreds of thousands of dollars into Arizona's 8th Congressional District, where the president won by more than 20 percentage points in 2016. The NRCC launched a coordinated \$170,000 TV ad buy on Monday with Republican candidate Debbie Lesko. The Congressional Leadership Fund is planning to spend about \$100,000 on a phone and digital effort aimed at turning out conservative voters, and the RNC is spending about \$280,000 on a field operation for Lesko.

"Trump's political team is also considering a range of options for getting involved in the race," Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt report. "Republicans insist the efforts are precautionary and that they fully expect to prevail in an April 24 special election. ... But the fact they feel compelled to spend at all shows yet again the fierce headwinds Republicans are facing in a midterm cycle dominated by Democratic enthusiasm, a scandal-plagued White House and poor presidential approval ratings." Lesko is running to replace former Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), who resigned last year following reports that he approached female staffers about becoming a potential surrogate mother. More: <https://politi.co/2pKolaC>

GOOD TUESDAY MORNING! Thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill, on this March 27.

POLITICO Space is our new, free weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age in Washington and beyond. **Sign up today to start receiving the newsletter right at launch on April 6.** *Presented by Boeing.*

MONDAY'S MOST CLICKED: HuffPost's [report](#) on Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) calling for Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg to testify was the winner.

REPUBLICANS RELY ON ONE-TIME DEMS TO RETAIN SENATE -- Four major Republican candidates in top battleground races voted in the Democratic presidential primary 10 years ago. And the fate of the Senate could come down to them. Mississippi Agriculture Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, who was a Democrat until 2010, will replace Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) when he resigns next week. "At least three other Republicans in some of the most vulnerable Democratic-held Senate seats up this year -- Rep. Evan Jenkins in West Virginia, businessman and veteran Kevin Nicholson in Wisconsin and former state legislator Mike Braun in Indiana -- also cast ballots in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary, leaving themselves open to brutal attacks from their primary rivals," Kevin Robillard reports.

"Their opponents are already turning their past primary votes into tests of their

conservative purity and fidelity to President Donald Trump," he adds. "The more those attacks are litigated, the bigger the question mark for these party switchers to galvanize base voters -- both in their primaries, and in a possible general election against a Democrat. All four races are critical to the GOP's Senate efforts in 2018: The party is defending the seat in Mississippi, while the other three are among the 10 Democratic-held seats up this year in states Trump carried two years ago." More: <https://politi.co/2Ggl2Eo>

SENATORS WANT INTEL ON HASPEL'S PAST -- The CIA may have to be more transparent on Gina Haspel's past if the agency wants the deputy director to be its next leader. "Senators who hold the keys to her confirmation are asking the CIA to provide more details on Haspel's role in using brutal interrogation tactics against detainees during the George W. Bush administration," Elana and Burgess report. Those requests have gone unanswered. And in a narrowly divided Senate with Rand Paul (R-Ky.) already opposed, how the agency addresses those concerns could sink or save the nominee.

"The CIA took a unique step in touting Haspel's bid on Friday by publishing a biographical sketch of the nominee, who by many accounts is well-respected by her colleagues," they write. "That followed an earlier roundup of praise for Haspel from intelligence officials appointed by both parties, including Obama-era CIA Directors Leon Panetta and John Brennan. But however humanizing her official CIA portrayal -- Haspel is described as a University of Kentucky basketball fan who found her first overseas posting 'right out of a spy novel' and would be the first female CIA chief -- senators want to know far more politically volatile things about her." Much more: <https://politi.co/2pImDwB>

RUMOR MILL -- Rep. Mark Amodei (R-Nev.) parroted a rumor that House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) "is getting ready to resign in the next 30 to 60 days and that Steve Scalise will be the new speaker." Amodei told "Nevada Newsmakers" the rumor is "interesting" because no one has talked to members about how they'd vote on new leadership -- unless "they have talked to all of the members but me." Ryan's office said he isn't resigning, and "Amodei is not particularly close to the speaker, who has a small inner circle of advisers and who makes decisions about his political future with an even smaller round of confidants and family," The Washington Post's Paul Kane reports.

"But Amodei publicly reopened the discussion that has been kept to private whispers within the House Republican Conference about whether Ryan will run to lead the House GOP next year," he continues. "Republicans would be stunned if there was an outright resignation, in the middle of the term, without any political scandal, and many would suspect they had little chance to win the majority in November. The traditional route for a House speaker looking toward the exits is to run for another term and announce immediately after the election that he or she is stepping down, particularly if the party loses the majority." More: <https://wapo.st/2ujsMny>

MCCONNELL BACKS BILL EASING UP ON HEMP CULTIVATION -- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) will introduce legislation to allow states to regulate their hemp industries, a move Burgess notes could be a boon should McConnell seek reelection in 2020. "Hemp growth was once outlawed in the United States, but McConnell worked in 2014 to write a new law allowing pilot programs for it," Burgess reports. "Since then, Kentucky has become

the state with the third-most acres of hemp growth. ... McConnell's move to relax regulations on hemp production comes as his colleagues increasingly believe the Kentucky Republican will seek a seventh term in 2020." More: <https://politi.co/2I9oD81>

GRASSLEY CALLS FOR ZUCKERBERG TESTIMONY -- Senate Judiciary Committee Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) joined a growing number of panels and lawmakers calling for Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg to testify in the wake of revelations that Trump-linked Cambridge Analytics improperly obtained data on some 50 million Facebook users. Grassley invited Zuckerberg, Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to an April 10 hearing on data privacy. The committee said Zuckerberg will be asked about "Facebook's past and future policies regarding the protection and monitoring of consumer data." The FTC and attorneys general from 37 states and territories are also pursuing investigations. More: <https://politi.co/2umMSgR>

INSIDE THE COLLAPSE OF A BIPARTISAN OBAMACARE DEAL -- Obamacare broke their alliance. "Just seven months after Sens. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) heralded the beginning of a new bipartisan era on health care following the collapse of Obamacare repeal efforts, their lofty ambitions ended in much the same way as every Obamacare-related negotiation over the last eight years -- with claims of betrayal, warnings of political fallout and no progress toward bridging the deep divide over the nation's health care system," Adam Cancryn and Jennifer Haberkorn report. "When Congress put its finishing touches on a \$1.3 trillion spending bill late last week, there was one glaring omission: a proposal to head off huge premium spikes just before the November midterm elections."

"The unraveling of the senators' health care partnership, which culminated in an increasingly bitter dispute over abortion policy, effectively ended Congress' last best chance of shoring up Obamacare this year, while doubling as a fresh sign of just how far apart the two parties remain on health care," they write. "Murray and Alexander came closer than ever before to striking a good-faith deal aimed at stabilizing the health law -- only to watch it collapse over peripheral policy disagreements and broader political calculations." Much more: <https://politi.co/2GedEJN>

TRUMP NOMINATES SCHUMER AIDE TO FTC -- Trump has nominated Rebecca Slaughter, chief counsel to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), to the FTC, which works with DOJ to enforce antitrust law. Slaughter, a Yale graduate, has worked for Schumer since 2009. "Slaughter, if confirmed by the Senate, would hold the position for the rest of a seven-year term ending in 2022," Diane Bartz and Eric Walsh report for Reuters. "She would become the second Democratic commissioner along with Rohit Chopra, a former official at the Consumer Financial Protection Board. ... The agency has five commissioners but only three can be from one political party."

Schumer recommended Slaughter to the White House. "Slaughter will make an excellent FTC commissioner," he said in a statement. "Throughout her time in public service she has worked tirelessly and effectively. I'm confident that following her confirmation, those qualities will make her a tremendous addition to the Commission." More: <https://reut.rs/2umT08T>

RSC TO TAP HERITAGE ACTION STAFFER AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -- The Republican Study Committee will name Dan Ziegler of Heritage Action as its next executive director. "The move comes shortly after the ouster of the last RSC chief and amid questions about the ideological direction of the more than 154-member group," Philip Wegmann reports for the Washington Examiner. "Scott Parkinson was out as executive director last month, after he offered off-the-record criticism of Republican leadership at an event sponsored by the Heritage Foundation." More: <https://washex.am/2DYeCru>

SCOTT READIES SENATE CHALLENGE -- Florida Gov. Rick Scott teased a "major announcement" that will come April 9, putting "to bed any lingering doubt about whether he would" challenge Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), Matt Dixon reports. "His staff would not elaborate on specifics, but Jackie Schutz Zeckman, Scott's chief of staff, resigned over the weekend and is being replaced by longtime staffer Brad Piepenbrink. Schutz Zeckman is almost certain to end up on the campaign. She is one of Scott's most trusted advisers, serving on both his campaigns and at various posts during his eight years in the governor's mansion."

"**Scott's expected decision to enter the race** comes at a time when the governor is at his political peak," he writes. "He has spent most of his time in the governor's mansion with underwater approval ratings, but his shift from tea party-inspired budget slasher to a more moderate presence focused on spending for education, infrastructure and economic development has moved his approval ratings in a positive direction." More: <https://politi.co/2GbNDyZ>

TRANSITIONS -- **Ryan Taylor** is leaving the office of Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), where he serves as communications director.

Melissa Brown is serving as press secretary and digital director for Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.). She previously served as press secretary for Rep. Ted Budd (R-N.C.).

WEEKEND WEDDING -- **Katharine Nasielski**, national security legislative correspondent to Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.), married **Ben Kurland**, 3L at Georgetown Law School and a DOJ alum, at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. "The ceremony was performed by Rabbi David Saperstein, former U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom. The couple met in D.C. in 2013 and had a memorable first date at the Big Hunt."

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- **The House and Senate** are out.

MONDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- Eugene Pagano was first to correctly guess that John Tyler is the president who also served in the Provisional Confederate Congress.

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- Who was the last House leader to serve as president? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: nmccaskill@politico.com.

GET HUDDLE [emailed to your phone](#) each morning.

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<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/03/27/new-census-question-could-affect-congressional-districts-national-republicans-pour-into-az-race-can-the-cia-satisfy-the-senate-trump-nominates-schumer-aide-259639>

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From: Ferguson, Lincoln
Sent: Wed 11/8/2017 2:37:06 PM
Subject: Re: FOR APPROVAL: EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

Can you add the USA Today article?

Sent from my iPhone

> On Nov 8, 2017, at 9:29 AM, Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov> wrote:

>

> EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

>

> Beaumont Enterprise: EDITORIAL: Exxon Mobil/EPA Deal Strikes Fair Balance

> At a time of increased partisanship and contentiousness in Austin and Washington, it's encouraging to see that reasonable compromise is still possible between environmental regulators and petrochemical plants. An agreement between Exxon Mobil and the Environmental Protection Agency could serve as a model for future disputes that seek the right balance in a modern economy. Exxon Mobil agreed to spend \$300 million to retrofit eight facilities in Texas and Louisiana, including Beaumont, Baytown and Mount Belvieu, to address complaints that it had failed to monitor flaring at those sites. The company also agreed to a \$2.5 million civil penalty with the federal government and Colorado and to spend \$1 million to plant trees in Baytown. It also vowed to reduce the waste gases sent through flares and improve the efficiency of those flares. The case clearly predated the changes in the EPA under President Trump, where the focus has shifted to reducing environmental regulations rather than protecting the environment. Yet the deal was closed with the current leadership of the EPA, so the importance of clean air and water has not been abandoned. Predictably, one environmental group (350.org) called the agreement "a slap on the wrist" for Exxon Mobil. But Luke Metzger of Environment Texas said, "It's a very good settlement."

> The USA Today: Pruitt Says Alarming Climate Report Will Not Deter Replacement Of Clean Power Plan

> EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said a newly released comprehensive government report that lays most of the blame for the rise of global temperatures to human activity won't deter him from continuing to roll back the Obama-era Clean Power Plan aimed at combating climate change. "We're taking the very necessary step to evaluate our authority under the Clean Air Act and we'll take steps that are required to issue a subsequent rule. That's our focus," Pruitt said in an interview with USA TODAY Tuesday. "Does this report have any bearing on that? No it doesn't. It doesn't impact the withdrawal and it doesn't impact the replacement." The Trump administration last month began the formal process of dismantling the Clean Power Plan rule intended to curb carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Pruitt, who sued to block it as Oklahoma's attorney general, said Congress never gave the EPA the Obama administration the authority to implement such a sweeping regulation. In his first public comments since the Trump Administration released the National Climate Assessment Friday, Pruitt said the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court last year to suspend the regulation until legal challenges are resolved has "created great uncertainty" about the current regulatory framework.

>

> Quartz: The EPA Has Approved The Release Of Weaponized Mosquitoes In 20 US States

> The US Environmental Protection Agency has given its approval for MosquitoMate, a Kentucky-based biotechnology company, to release its bacteria-infected male mosquitoes in several parts of the United States. The EPA approval was first reported by Nature on Monday (Nov. 6), and confirmed by the company. The EPA didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from Quartz. The company's lab-grown mosquitoes, which it calls ZAP males, are infected with the Wolbachia bacteria, naturally occurring in many insects, but not in Aedes aegypti, a vector for viruses such as yellow fever, dengue and Zika. When bacteria-infected males mate with uninfected females, the females produce eggs that don't hatch. In addition, infected mosquitoes are less likely to spread disease. According to Gizmodo, the EPA on Nov. 3 registered MosquitoMate's mosquito as a biopesticide, with a five-year license to sell in 20 different states. Entomologist Stephen Dobson, CEO of MosquitoMate, told Gizmodo that the company could start selling the infected mosquitoes next summer via contracts with government bodies and direct

to homeowners, beginning with Lexington, Ky. and expanding to nearby areas like Nashville, Tenn. Quartz reached out to MosquitoMate for comment, and will update when we hear back.

> Government Executive: EPA Chief's Scientific Advisory Panel Moves Draw Mixed Reactions

> After weeks of news leaks and controversy, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Nov. 2 announced his slate of appointments to three key agency scientific advisory boards. Coming two days after a decision to change membership criteria to disqualify EPA research grant-recipients from also serving on advisory boards, Pruitt's moves generally drew praise from congressional Republicans and industry but brickbats from Democrats and science-related professional groups. "To ensure that EPA is receiving the best independent scientific advice, I am appointing highly qualified experts and scientists to these important committees," Pruitt said. In a fair, open, and transparent fashion, EPA reviewed hundreds of qualified applicants nominated for these committees. Members who will be appointed include experts throughout the environmental stakeholder community, including from NGOs, academia, industry, and state, tribal and local officials. The makeup of the membership speaks to EPA's commitment to science and openness to expertise from a diverse array of perspectives. Those nominees willing to serve have committed to remaining financially independent from EPA grants during their tenures."

>

> E&E News: EPA Defends RCRA Settlement With Enviro

> Federal judges yesterday appeared skeptical of a challenge to a settlement between U.S. EPA and environmentalists that could affect oil and gas regulation. In oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a lawyer for North Dakota argued that the state was unfairly excluded in the lead-up to the deal. In the 2016 consent decree, EPA agreed to consider revising Resource Conservation and Recovery Act standards to include oil and gas waste. EPA has until March 2019 to decide whether the program should be updated and then until July 2021 to complete any update. But North Dakota says the agreement should be tossed because it infringes on states' rights to be consulted about revisions to RCRA, a law for which states often take the lead on implementation. The state also argues that a lower court erred when it blocked North Dakota from intervening in the litigation.

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> E&E News: Natural Gas Threatens Paris Goals — Report

> Europe risks blowing through its greenhouse gas budget unless it phases out natural gas, according to a new study that finds governments have underestimated the fossil fuel's methane emissions. Natural gas emissions will add 0.6 degree Celsius to global warming and, along with other fossil fuel use, bring Europe past the point of meeting the Paris climate agreement's commitments within a decade, according to a report from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

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> National Morning News Highlights 11.8.17

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> Reuters: Democrats Win Bitter Virginia Governor's Race In Setback For Trump

> Democrat Ralph Northam won a bitter race for Virginia governor on Tuesday, dealing a setback to President Donald Trump with a decisive victory over a Republican who had adopted some of the president's combative tactics and issues. Northam, the state's lieutenant governor, overcame a barrage of attack ads by Republican Ed Gillespie that hit the soft-spoken Democrat on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues. Trump, who endorsed Gillespie but did not campaign with him, had taken a break from his Asia trip to send tweets and record messages on Tuesday supporting the former chairman of the Republican National Committee. But after the outcome, Trump quickly distanced himself from Gillespie. "Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for," Trump tweeted. "With the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!"

>

> The Washington Post: Trump Strikes At The Heart Of The North Korean Regime With Speech

> President Trump has said on several occasions that he's willing to talk to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Well, on Wednesday, Trump did — after a fashion. The American president directly addressed his 33-year-old nemesis during his speech to South Korea's National Assembly. This time, Trump didn't call Kim "Little Rocket Man" or use the kinds of rhetorical flourishes that play so well on Twitter. But the words that Trump used will have cut deeper because they strike at the very heart of the Kim regime. If there is one thing that Kim Jong Un has shown that he cannot tolerate, it's personal criticism. "North Korea is not the paradise your grandfather envisioned," Trump said to Kim, who, if he was in Pyongyang, was just 120

miles away. "It is a hell that no person deserves."

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> TRUMP TWEETS

> Beaumont Enterprise

> <http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/opinions/editorials/amp/EDITORIAL-Exxon-Mobil-EPA-deal-strikes-fair-12324499.php>

> EDITORIAL: Exxon Mobil/EPA Deal Strikes Fair Balance

> By Enterprise Editorial Staff, 11/2/17

>

> At a time of increased partisanship and contentiousness in Austin and Washington, it's encouraging to see that reasonable compromise is still possible between environmental regulators and petrochemical plants. An agreement between Exxon Mobil and the Environmental Protection Agency could serve as a model for future disputes that seek the right balance in a modern economy.

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> Predictably, one environmental group (350.org) called the agreement "a slap on the wrist" for Exxon Mobil. But Luke Metzger of Environment Texas said, "It's a very good settlement."

>

> As with so many of these complex cases, a perfect agreement is probably not possible. This one seems to find the balance needed for people who want a clean environment but also drive cars and use plastics.

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> The reality is that those industries will produce some level of pollution. It should be as low as possible and never constitute a threat to public health. But our air and water will never be as pure as they were before the Mayflower Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

>

> For the next several decades at least, oil and natural gas will be needed to fuel our economy before wind and solar power take over - if they ever do. Agreements like this will help manage the transition.

> The USA Today

> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/11/08/pruitt-says-alarming-climate-report-not-deter-replacement-clean-power-plan/839857001/>

> Pruitt Says Alarming Climate Report Will Not Deter Replacement Of Clean Power Plan

> By Ledge King, 11/8/17

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> WASHINGTON — EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said a newly released comprehensive government report that lays most of the blame for the rise of global temperatures to human activity won't deter him from continuing to roll back the Obama-era Clean Power Plan aimed at combating climate change.

>

> "We're taking the very necessary step to evaluate our authority under the Clean Air Act and we'll take steps that are required to issue a subsequent rule. That's our focus," Pruitt said in an interview with USA TODAY Tuesday. "Does this report have any bearing on that? No it doesn't. It doesn't impact the withdrawal and it doesn't impact the replacement."

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>

> In his first public comments since the Trump Administration released the National Climate Assessment Friday, Pruitt said the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court last year to suspend the regulation until legal challenges are resolved has "created great uncertainty" about the current regulatory framework.

>

> The EPA is in the midst of drafting a replacement rule that will have to be as legally defensible as the very rule targeted for elimination as environmental groups are already threatening legal action.

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> "Our job is to administer statutes," Pruitt said, explaining the limits of what EPA can do. "We have to act (based) on the authority given to us by Congress."

>

> President Trump has dismissed climate change as a "hoax" perpetrated by the Chinese to gain a competitive edge over the United States. A champion of the coal industry, Trump has followed through on his vow to undo the climate change agenda implemented under Obama by pulling out of the Paris Accord and withdrawing the Clean Power Plan.

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> The Environmental Protection Agency, under Pruitt's direction, has been at the forefront of that effort.

>

> Pruitt's assertion that nothing has changed because of the climate report is not surprising given his steadfast opposition to the Clean Power Plan. Still, his position in the wake of what environmentalists see as powerful evidence of human-caused climate change is disappointing to critics of the administration.

>

> David Doniger, a climate change expert with the Natural Resources Defense Council, criticized the EPA administrator for abandoning the Obama-era rule, saying the Supreme Court has "unequivocally" recognized EPA's authority to curb carbon pollution under the Clean Air Act.

>

> "The National Climate Assessment has sounded a five-alarm fire bell, and Scott Pruitt pretends he can't hear it," he said. "The assessment shows unequivocally that carbon pollution is causing dangerous climate change and that our future depends on whether we cut that pollution."

>

> The release last week of the federally mandated report prepared by the nation's top scientists every four years for the president, the Congress and the public concludes, "based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century."

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> Pruitt Tuesday downplayed the importance environmental groups have placed on the report, saying the assessment is part of the ongoing debate between scientists over the causes of and responses to warming temperatures.

>

> "Obviously the climate is changing and has always changed, (and) humans contribute to that. Measuring with exact precision is very challenging," he said. "So I think the report (is) good to encourage an open dialogue on this."

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> One of the report's authors, climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, boiled down the findings in a tweet:

>

> The report concluded that global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration has now passed 400 parts per million, a level that last occurred about 3 million years ago, when both global average temperature and sea level were significantly higher than today.

>

> The only solution to the problem is to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, emitted globally, the report said.

>

> Hundreds of scientists from 13 federal agencies assessed more than 1,500 scientific studies and reports to produce the paper. The National Academy of Sciences also peer-reviewed it before release.

>

> Other findings include:

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> —Global average sea level has risen by about 7-8 inches since 1900, with almost half (about 3 inches) of that rise occurring since 1993.

>

> —Global average sea levels are expected to continue to rise — by at least several inches in the next 15 years and by 1-4 feet by 2100. A rise of as much as 8 feet by 2100 cannot be ruled out.

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> —Heavy rainfall is increasing in intensity and frequency globally and across the United States and is expected to continue to increase.

>

> —The rate of daily tidal flooding is accelerating in more than 25 Atlantic and Gulf Coast cities.

>

> —Heat waves have become more frequent in the United States since the 1960s, while extreme cold temperatures and cold waves are less frequent.

>

> —The rate of large forest fires in the western United States and Alaska has increased since the early 1980s and is projected to further increase.

>

> —Annual trends toward earlier spring melt and reduced snowpack are already affecting water resources in the western United States.

> Quartz

> <https://qz.com/1123456/the-epa-has-approved-the-release-of-weaponized-mosquitoes-in-20-us-states/>

> The EPA Has Approved The Release Of Weaponized Mosquitoes In 20 US States

> By Echo Huang, 11/8/17

>

> The US Environmental Protection Agency has given its approval for MosquitoMate, a Kentucky-based biotechnology company, to release its bacteria-infected male mosquitoes in several parts of the United States.

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>

> The permitted states include mostly those similar weather conditions to Kentucky, New York, and California, states where the company earlier conducted trials—as well as Washington DC. In April, the company began a 12-week field trial that involved releasing 20,000 male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in Stock Island, in the Florida Keys. The male mosquitoes don't bite, which should make the release of these insects sound less alarming.

>

> Other countries have been using lab-produced mosquitoes to reduce their populations. In China's southern city of Guangzhou, scientists used a similar method to control the insects' population by building a mosquito factory that produced millions of Wolbachia-infected male mosquitoes last year. Brazil has used the bacteria-infected mosquitoes in its campaign against the Zika virus.

>

> Brazil has also tried the use of a different kind of lab mosquito, one that is genetically modified, which has faced resistance in the US.

> Government Executive
 > <http://www.govexec.com/management/2017/11/epa-chiefs-scientific-advisory-panel-moves-draw-mixed-reactions/142365/>
 > EPA Chief's Scientific Advisory Panel Moves Draw Mixed Reactions
 > By Charles Clark, 11/7/17
 >
 > After weeks of news leaks and controversy, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Nov. 2 announced his slate of appointments to three key agency scientific advisory boards.
 >
 > Coming two days after a decision to change membership criteria to disqualify EPA research grant-recipients from also serving on advisory boards, Pruitt's moves generally drew praise from congressional Republicans and industry but brickbats from Democrats and science-related professional groups.
 >
 > "To ensure that EPA is receiving the best independent scientific advice, I am appointing highly qualified experts and scientists to these important committees," Pruitt said. In a fair, open, and transparent fashion, EPA reviewed hundreds of qualified applicants nominated for these committees. Members who will be appointed include experts throughout the environmental stakeholder community, including from NGOs, academia, industry, and state, tribal and local officials. The makeup of the membership speaks to EPA's commitment to science and openness to expertise from a diverse array of perspectives. Those nominees willing to serve have committed to remaining financially independent from EPA grants during their tenures."
 >
 > The three panels are the Board of Scientific Counselors, the Clean Air Science Advisory Committee and the Science Advisory Board.
 >
 > The new grant rules are designed to "strengthen member independence," "increase state, tribal and local government participation," "enhance geographic diversity" and "promote fresh perspectives," Pruitt said in his Oct. 31 directive.
 >
 > Reacting to the new grants policy, Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, said Pruitt "is restoring the EPA advisory boards to their original purpose – to provide the administrator objective advice on science and technology policies. For eight years, the EPA has had science boards filled with members who have had conflicts of interest."
 >
 > Smith's committee earlier this year passed a bill to reform the agency's advisory boards along similar lines. "It's impossible for these boards to be fair and balanced in their advice and their decisions when many board members are receiving grants and funds from the EPA."
 >
 > But committee Democrats on Nov. 3, along with counterparts on the Energy and Commerce panel, sent Pruitt a letter "strongly opposing the directive he issued imposing severe limitations on the scientific advice and expertise that the agency's science advisory committees may receive. The directive would bar scores of the nation's most qualified scientists from sitting on these committees. It also appears to violate the law regulating federal advisory committees," wrote the group led by science panel ranking member Rep. Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, calling on Pruitt to withdraw the directive. "In reality, the measure will seriously diminish the scientific expertise the EPA receives. At the same time, the order will increase the number of industry representatives and industry-funded scientists providing advice to the EPA."
 >
 > The American Association for the Advancement of Science also denounced Pruitt's changes. "This EPA decision is motivated by politics, not the desire for quality scientific information," wrote its CEO, former Rep. Rush Holt, D-N.J. "Federal agencies should recognize and enable input of scientific and technical information that represents the best available evidence. The government must ensure that its science advisers possess the requisite scientific, medical and technical expertise to inform agency policies."
 >
 > He cited existing conflict-of-interest guidelines at EPA and the National Institutes of Health. "Leading scientific experts who are conducting environmental science research should not be prohibited from participating on EPA science adviser boards and committees if they have met the appropriate financial

conflict of interest policy," he added.

>

> But Pruitt's moves were applauded by the American Chemistry Council. "The changes.... will help ensure EPA's scientific review panels are well balanced with perspectives from qualified scientists of diverse backgrounds and that board members are free of any disqualifying conflicts of interest," CEO Cal Dooley said. He praised the appointments of his council's own chemist Kimberly White to EPA's Science Advisory Board and the naming of his staff toxicologist Rick Becker to the Board of Scientific Counselors.

> E&E News

> <https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2017/11/08/stories/1060065891>

> EPA Defends RCRA Settlement With Enviros

> By Ellen Gilmer, 11/8/17

>

> Federal judges yesterday appeared skeptical of a challenge to a settlement between U.S. EPA and environmentalists that could affect oil and gas regulation.

>

> In oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a lawyer for North Dakota argued that the state was unfairly excluded in the lead-up to the deal.

>

> In the 2016 consent decree, EPA agreed to consider revising Resource Conservation and Recovery Act standards to include oil and gas waste. EPA has until March 2019 to decide whether the program should be updated and then until July 2021 to complete any update.

>

> But North Dakota says the agreement should be tossed because it infringes on states' rights to be consulted about revisions to RCRA, a law for which states often take the lead on implementation. The state also argues that a lower court erred when it blocked North Dakota from intervening in the litigation.

>

> "This case is not about dates; it's about a process — and an incomplete one at that," Greenberg Traurig LLP attorney Paul Seby, representing the state, told the court.

>

> Seby's remark was in response to EPA's repeated argument that the settlement doesn't harm North Dakota because it merely sets out a schedule for considering a regulatory change.

>

> EPA has vigorously defended the RCRA deal, adopting a position somewhat discordant with Administrator Scott Pruitt's ongoing efforts to crack down on settlements with environmental groups. Agency lawyers noted in a recent legal filing that settlements are often necessary when groups sue EPA over missing a statutory deadline and "the agency is left with few defenses, if any" (Energywire, Oct. 27).

>

> North Dakota sought to intervene in the original district court proceedings that led to the settlement, but the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rejected the request. The state appealed to the D.C. Circuit after the settlement was reached last December.

>

> 'You have a seat at that table'

>

> The three-judge panel hearing the case yesterday seemed skeptical of North Dakota's claims that the settlement harms the state. Judge Nina Pillard, an Obama appointee, noted that the state would have plenty of opportunity to weigh in on any regulatory changes if EPA moves forward on an update to RCRA programs.

>

> "You have a seat at that table," she said. "Nobody's excluding you from that."

>

> George W. Bush appointee Judge Brett Kavanaugh made similar observations: "Just to put a date in there is not excluding you from what is going to transpire."

>

> Judge Sri Srinivasan, an Obama appointee, zeroed in on the wording of the decree, asking Seby whether it would assuage North Dakota's concerns if the court interpreted the document to imply a

requirement that EPA comply with RCRA consultation obligations.

>

> Seby maintained that states have a right to be consulted even before EPA begins considering whether RCRA updates are needed. The consent decree short-circuited that process, he said.

>

> Justice Department attorney Robert Lundman, representing EPA, responded that the consent decree does not change any rights states have in the process.

>

> "There's nothing in the consent decree that rewrites those terms," he said.

>

> Environmental Integrity Project attorney Adam Kron argued that North Dakota has not been harmed by the settlement because it is merely concerned about the possibility of adverse regulation — which courts have previously rejected as a basis for legal standing.

>

> EIP and a coalition of environmental groups filed the original lawsuit against EPA in May 2016.

> E&E News

> <https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/11/08/stories/1060065911>

> Natural Gas Threatens Paris Goals — Report

> By Arthur Nelsen, 11/8/17

>

> Europe risks blowing through its greenhouse gas budget unless it phases out natural gas, according to a new study that finds governments have underestimated the fossil fuel's methane emissions.

>

> Natural gas emissions will add 0.6 degree Celsius to global warming and, along with other fossil fuel use, bring Europe past the point of meeting the Paris climate agreement's commitments within a decade, according to a report from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

>

> Keeping the Paris Agreement's pledge of limiting warming to less than 2 C would require Europe to phase out all fossil fuels — including gas — by 2035 and decrease emissions by 12 percent each year.

>

> Instead, the European Union has accelerated the number of new projects and considers gas a "bridge" to expand renewables further (Arthur Neslen, London Guardian, Nov. 7). — AAA

> Reuters

> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election/democrats-win-bitter-virginia-governors-race-in-setback-for-trump-idUSKBN1D71D7>

> Democrats Win Bitter Virginia Governor's Race In Setback For Trump

> By John Whitesides, 11/8/17

>

> WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democrat Ralph Northam won a bitter race for Virginia governor on Tuesday, dealing a setback to President Donald Trump with a decisive victory over a Republican who had adopted some of the president's combative tactics and issues.

>

> Northam, the state's lieutenant governor, overcame a barrage of attack ads by Republican Ed Gillespie that hit the soft-spoken Democrat on divisive issues such as immigration, gang crime and Confederate statues.

>

> Trump, who endorsed Gillespie but did not campaign with him, had taken a break from his Asia trip to send tweets and record messages on Tuesday supporting the former chairman of the Republican National Committee.

>

> But after the outcome, Trump quickly distanced himself from Gillespie.

>

> "Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for," Trump tweeted. "With the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!"

>

> At his victory party, Northam told supporters the sweeping Democratic win in Virginia sent a message to

the country.

>

> "Virginia has told us to end the divisiveness, that we will not condone hatred and bigotry, and to end the politics that have torn this country apart," Northam said.

>

> The Virginia race highlighted a slate of state and local elections that also included a governor's race in New Jersey, where Democrat Phil Murphy, a former investment banker and ambassador to Germany, defeated Republican Kim Guadagno for the right to succeed Republican Chris Christie.

>

> Murphy had promised to be a check on Trump in Democratic-leaning New Jersey. Guadagno, the lieutenant governor, was hampered by her association with the unpopular Christie.

>

> BOOST FOR DEMOCRATS

>

> Murphy's win and the Northam victory in Virginia, a state Democrat Hillary Clinton won by 5 percentage points in the 2016 presidential election, provided a much-needed boost for national Democrats who were desperate to turn grassroots resistance to Trump into election victories.

>

> Democrats had already lost four special congressional elections earlier this year.

>

> But a strong turnout in the Democratic-leaning northern Virginia suburbs of Washington helped propel Northam, who in the end won relatively easily. With nearly all precincts reporting, he led by a 53 percent to 45 percent margin.

>

> Exit polls in Virginia showed that one-third of the voters went to the polls to oppose Trump, and only 17 percent went to support him.

>

> Slideshow (25 Images)

> Democrats also swept the other top statewide Virginia races, winning the offices of lieutenant governor and attorney general, and gained seats in the Virginia House of Delegates. Democrat Danica Roem beat a long-time Republican incumbent to become the first transgender person to win a state legislative race.

>

> "This is a comprehensive political victory from statehouse to courthouse. Thank you Donald Trump!" Democratic U.S. Representative Gerald Connolly of Virginia told Northam's supporters at a victory party in northern Virginia.

>

> In Virginia, Democrats had worried that if Gillespie won, Republicans would see it as a green light to emphasize divisive cultural issues in their campaigns for next year's elections, when all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 33 of the U.S. Senate's 100 seats come up for election. Republicans now control both chambers.

>

> Gillespie, speaking to crestfallen supporters in Richmond, Virginia, said he had run a "very policy-focused campaign."

>

> But voters in Arlington County - a suburban Democratic stronghold bordering Washington - said national politics were important to their votes.

>

> "Trump talks about draining the swamp, but Gillespie kind of is the swamp," said Nick Peacemaker, who works in marketing and considered himself a Republican until Trump won the party's presidential nomination.

>

> Peacemaker said Gillespie seemed to shift closer to Trump's policies after securing the Republican gubernatorial nomination.

>

> In local races across the country, Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio in New York and Marty Walsh in Boston both easily won re-election. Voters were also picking mayors in Detroit, Atlanta, Seattle and

Charlotte, North Carolina.

> The Washington Post

> https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/trump-strikes-at-the-heart-of-the-north-korean-regime-with-speech/2017/11/08/8b1d6d48-c309-11e7-9922-4151f5ca6168_story.html

> Trump Strikes At The Heart Of The North Korean Regime With Speech

> By Anna Fifield, 11/8/17

>

> TOKYO — President Trump has said on several occasions that he's willing to talk to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Well, on Wednesday, Trump did — after a fashion.

>

> The American president directly addressed his 33-year-old nemesis during his speech to South Korea's National Assembly. This time, Trump didn't call Kim "Little Rocket Man" or use the kinds of rhetorical flourishes that play so well on Twitter.

>

> But the words that Trump used will have cut deeper because they strike at the very heart of the Kim regime.

>

> If there is one thing that Kim Jong Un has shown that he cannot tolerate, it's personal criticism.

>

> "North Korea is not the paradise your grandfather envisioned," Trump said to Kim, who, if he was in Pyongyang, was just 120 miles away. "It is a hell that no person deserves."

>

> Kim Il Sung, who is revered like a god in North Korean propaganda, established the country in 1948 as a "socialist paradise" of free housing, health care, and education where people would want for nothing. Kim Jong Un claims his legitimacy to be the leader as the direct descendant of this quasi-deity.

>

> Trump devoted a large part of his address to detailing the human rights abuses that the Kims have committed in North Korea, filling his speech with words like "twisted," "sinister," "tyrant," "fascism" and "cult."

>

> "I wanted to stand up from my seat and shout 'yahoo!'" said Lee Hyeon-seo, an escapee from North Korea who was sitting in the assembly hall Wednesday during Trump's address. "We just don't hear people talking about North Korea in this way in South Korea, so I was very emotional during the speech. I was very impressed."

>

> Trump noted the slave-like conditions that North Korean workers endure, the malnutrition among children, the suppression of religion, and the forced-labor prison camps where North Koreans endure "torture, starvation, rape, and murder on a constant basis."

>

> Other advocates for North Koreans expressed hope that Trump's remarks would remind the outside world that the country is not just home to a dictator with nuclear weapons but 25 million people who suffer under him.

>

> "President Trump spoke about human rights in North Korea more than any other previous U.S. president," said Jeong Kwang-il, who was held as a political prisoner in North Korea and now runs the "No Chain for North Korea" human rights group in Seoul. "I'm hopeful that American policy toward North Korea will focus more on improving human rights there."

>

> The president did not mince his words about the way the Kim regime has managed to retain its grip on the populace.

>

> "North Korea is a country ruled as a cult. At the center of this military cult is a deranged belief in the leader's destiny to rule as parent protector over a conquered Korean Peninsula and an enslaved Korean people," he said.

>

> The success of South Korea discredited "the dark fantasy at the heart of the Kim regime," Trump said.

>

> It is hard to exaggerate the reverence with which North Koreans are forced to treat the Kim family. Every home and all public buildings must display portraits of Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il, that must be cleaned only with a special cloth. North Koreans must bow at monuments to the leaders and sing songs celebrating their supposedly legendary feats.

>

> There is no escaping the Kims and the narrative that they have created a utopia that is the envy of the world.

>

> So to suggest that the regime is founded on a “fantasy” and that the country is something other than a socialist paradise amounts to heresy in North Korea.

>

> “This speech made the ‘axis of evil’ speech look friendly,” said John Delury, a professor of international relations at Yonsei University in Seoul, referring to President George W. Bush’s 2002 State of the Union speech, in which he included North Korea as a country seeking weapons of mass destruction.

>

> “That sent a signal to Pyongyang that the Americans are not open to changing their relationship with North Korea and that the president was deeply hostile and ideologically hostile to them.”

>

> But others saw an opening from Trump, with his suggestion there was a way out of the current quagmire. “Despite every crime you have committed against God and man . . . we will offer a path to a much better future,” Trump said, saying that this would require total denuclearization.

>

> The president publicly offered a “diplomacy exit ramp” to the Kim regime, Victor Cha, tipped to be Trump’s nominee for ambassador to South Korea, wrote on Twitter.

>

> At a news conference with South Korean President Moon Jae-in the previous day, Trump urged North Korea “to come to the table” and “do the right thing, not only for North Korea but for humanity all over the world.”

>

> At recent meetings near Geneva and in Moscow, Pyongyang’s representatives have signaled an interest in talks with the United States — as long as those talks are not about denuclearization, a non-starter for Washington.

>

> The regime in Pyongyang is likely to react angrily to Trump’s speech.

>

> After Trump threatened at the U.N. General Assembly in September to “totally destroy” North Korea and mocked Kim as “Rocket Man,” Kim took the unprecedented step of releasing a statement in his own name, calling Trump a “mentally deranged U.S. dotard” who would “pay dearly” for his threats.

>

> At the same time, North Korea’s foreign minister said the country might detonate a nuclear device over the Pacific.

>

> A U.N. commission of inquiry once charged that the blame for North Korea’s human rights abuses went all way to the top of the leadership, leading to calls for Kim Jong Un to be referred to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity.

>

> That prompted North Korean officials to respond publicly to questions about human rights conditions in a way they had not before — a clear attempt to defend the dignity of their leader.

>

> “North Korea tends to react sensitively to criticism in human rights,” said Cheong Seong-chang, director of the unification strategy program at the Sejong Institute, a private think tank in South Korea.

>

> He predicted that the response would be especially sharp because of the time that Trump spent talking about North Korea and the detail he went into, plus the president’s repeated calls for the world to isolate the country.

>
> “North Korea is highly likely to take Trump’s address as a declaration of war and call for a holy war of its own against the U.S.,” Cheong said.
> TRUMP TWEETS
> [cid:image001.png@01D35874.163E5230]
> [cid:image002.png@01D35874.163E5230]
>
> <image001.png>
> <image002.png>
> <EPA Morning News Highlights 11.8.17.docx>

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 3/2/2018 7:32:04 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Gotham hires former congressman — Accenture hires Robert Hoffman for government relations in North America — Trade associations gear up for more lobbying on tariffs

By Marianne LeVine and Theodoric Meyer | 03/02/2018 02:30 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Garrett Ross

GOTHAM HIRES FORMER CONGRESSMAN: Gotham Government Relations and Communications, the New York lobbying firm that once counted President **Donald Trump** as a client, is bringing on former Rep. **Gary Ackerman** (D-N.Y.) as a partner. The hire gives Gotham, which opened a Washington office after Trump's victory, someone with deep experience in Washington. Ackerman retired in 2013 after nearly three decades in Congress, where he was known for the white carnation boutonniere he wore every day and the houseboat, dubbed "Unsinkable II," he lived on while in Washington.

- Ackerman isn't the first former Democratic congressman to sign on with a firm that has ties to Trump; **Ballard Partners**, which lobbied Trump in Florida and also opened a Washington office after the election, last year hired former Rep. **Robert Wexler** (D-Fla.). But Ackerman doesn't plan to do work that would require him to register to lobby, according to **Brad Gerstman**, a Gotham partner. Ackerman "is a household name in the world of policy making and advocacy," Gerstman said in a statement. "He brings to the table a wealth of knowledge in international and domestic affairs."

- Gotham also hired **Shai Franklin**, a consultant who previously worked for **Grieboski Jolly Caraway**. (One of the partners in that firm, **Stuart Jolly**, served as national field director for Trump's campaign and lobbied for **SPG**, another firm with Trump administration connections, after the election.) He'll be working with Gotham's current clients and helping to bring new foreign business to the firm. **David Schwartz**, another Gotham partner, said in a statement that the firm's "associates will learn about lobbying at the highest levels of international government" from Franklin.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

PRIZE UPDATE: We told you Thursday that we would award a prize to whoever could tell us which members hit up Tuesday's parties hosted by the **National Association of Broadcasters** and **Mylan**. The answer: Reps. **Darrell Issa** (R-Calif.) and **Karen Handel** (R-Ga.). (We realize the question was a little silly.) **Stewart Verdery** of **Monument Policy Group** was the first to guess the right answer. As a prize, we allowed him one trivia question to ask PI readers. Here it is: "**Fred Goldman**, the father of **O.J. Simpson** victim **Ron Goldman**, lobbied Congress in the late 1990s to pass what law?" Special shout-out in Monday's PI to the first person who gets it right.

ACCENTURE HIRES ROBERT HOFFMAN FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IN

NORTH AMERICA: Robert Hoffman will lead **Accenture's** government relations in North America starting next week. In an interview with PI, Hoffman said that in his new role he plans to make sure the "operation fully aligns with Accenture's business objectives "and will look at "public policies that are either on the table or that need to developed that can help companies unleash innovation and advance technology to improve corporate effectiveness." Hoffman said that while his main areas of focus have yet to be determined, he noted that among the issues he will likely focus on are cybersecurity policies, including those around information sharing and security standards. "Cybersecurity is obviously a very important issue that is critical not just to our economic security but to our national security," he said. Hoffman comes to Accenture from **Invariant**, where he was head of the firm's technology practice. He said that his work at Invariant involved advising multiple clients, while moving to Accenture "provides an opportunity to focus on a core set of policy objectives that will advance that company's cometitiviesess ad innovation and potential as well as their customers."

- **Heather Podesta**, founder of Invariant, praised Hoffman in a statement. "Robert was part of a tech advocacy team that has become Invariant's largest and fastest growing client practice, with innovative companies from the hardware, software, and services industries," she said. "Our clients will continue to be well served by our strong bipartisan team of skilled professionals who have a track record of results." Prior to working at Invariant, Hoffman also worked at **Motorola Solutions**, the **Information Technology Industry Council**, **Cognizant Technology Solutions** and **Oracle**.

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS GEAR UP FOR MORE LOBBYING ON TARIFFS: Many business trade groups are gearing up to lobby against the Trump administration's tariffs on aluminum and steel imports. In case you missed it (which you probably didn't), President **Donald Trump** announced Thursday that his administration would finalize next week a 25 percent tariff on steel imports and a 10 percent tariff on aluminum. In an interview with PI, **Kimberly Korbel**, executive director of the **American Wire Producers Association** , said that the group put out an action alert to its members urging them to contact their representatives and ask that they reach out to anyone at the White House with whom they may have influence. In addition, Korbel said the group is urging members to tell its employees to send letters to the White House opposing the tariffs. Last month, the trade group, along with the **American Gear Manufacturers Association**, the **Can Manufacturers Institute**, the **Fabricators and Manufacturers Association**, **International**, the **Forging Industry Association**, the **Industrial Fasteners Institute** and others, sent a letter to Trump urging him not to impose the tariffs. They're not alone. The **National Retail Federation's** CEO and president, **Matthew Shay**, said in a statement that the tariffs were a "tax on American families." **The Beer Institute's** president and CEO, **Jim McGreevy**, also blasted the move and urged the Department of Commerce "to exclude imported aluminum and cansheet used to make beer cans from these tariffs so as not to unnecessarily increase costs on American businesses and put jobs at risk "

- Lobbying efforts against the tariffs are still taking shape, but we're hearing that trade groups will continue to meet with House and Senate leadership, as well as top lawmakers on the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee. **Omar Nashashibi**, a partner at the **Franklin Partnership**, told PI that "at this point, the shock is really kicking in with a lot of members, [and] a lot of trade associations around town." He said that the "next step" is for the

"steel user and aluminum user side ...to really start education, not just members of Congress" but also the administration.

- But not everyone is upset. The tariffs were a big win for U.S. steel and aluminum manufacturers. **Thomas Gibson**, president and CEO of the **American Iron and Steel Institute**, thanked Trump in a statement. Labor groups, including the **United Steelworkers** and the **AFL-CIO**, also hailed the decision.

DEFINERS PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADDS TWO: **Definers Public Affairs** has hired **Ben Brow** as chief technology officer and **Sarah Pompei** as a senior adviser. Pompei, who was previously a director on **Lyft's** public policy team and director of communications at **Hewlett Packard Enterprise**, will continue her work with her own public affairs firm, **POMPEI VIII, LLC**. In an interview with PI, Pompei said that she will split her time advising clients in the United States and Europe. She said that she was drawn to her new role at Definers because of the organization's campaign-style approach to communication.

SENATORS INTRODUCE BIPARTISAN FARA BILL: Sens. **Dianne Feinstein** (D-Calif), **John Cornyn** (R-Texas), **Jeanne Shaheen** (D-N.H.) and **Todd Young** (R-Ind.) introduced legislation Thursday intended to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act by creating an enforcement unit within the Justice Department's National Security Division, increasing access to disclosures and updating the law's criminal and civil enforcement provisions. But not everyone is excited about Thursday's legislation or a companion bill from Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa). "U.S. subsidiaries of foreign-owned corporations say they are most concerned that the bills would reverse a long-standing exemption and require their lobbyists to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act," **Roll Call's Kate Ackley** write. Full story.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Alliance For Progress (PAC)
American Catalog Mailers Association PAC (Acma PAC) (PAC)
Free Born Blacks PAC (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

None

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Cyrrus Analytics LLC: Amazon Web Services
Liberty Government Affairs: American Civil Liberties Union (ALCU)
Blue Star Strategies LLC: ABLV Advisory Services, SIA

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2018/03/02/gotham-hires-former-congressman-122239>

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Driving the Day

BULLETIN -- AP: "President: Mexico hit by biggest quake in century, 5 killed," by Christopher Sherman and E. Eduardo Castillo in Mexico City: "A major earthquake off Mexico's southern coast killed at least five people, with the president saying Friday it was the biggest in a century to hit the country. Houses toppled and the quake produced tsunami waves and sent people running into the streets in panic.

"The U.S. Geological Survey reported the earthquake's magnitude as 8.1, but President Enrique Pena Nieto says it was 8.2, making it the largest in Mexico in 100 years. He also said it was bigger than the 8.1 quake in 1985, which killed thousands and devastated large sections of Mexico City. ... The death toll could rise as authorities assess the damage. The president said that 62 aftershocks followed the quake and it's possible that one as strong as 7.2 could strike in the next 24 hours. Pena Nieto also said that serious damage had been caused and that 1 million customers initially had been without power following the quake, but that electricity had been restored to 800,000 of them." <http://bit.ly/2wNB4nM>

-- IN JUST THE LAST FEW WEEKS there have been widespread fires in Montana, Los Angeles and Oregon. Two historic hurricanes have barreled toward the United States and the Caribbean, leaving mass devastation in their wake. And the worst earthquake in a century just hit Mexico, bringing with it tsunami-like waves.

Happy Friday. THE REPUBLICAN HOUSE is expected to clear President Donald Trump's debt-ceiling, government-funding and Harvey-aid deal by noon today. **EMAIL FROM THE WHIP'S OFFICE:** "In order to ensure Members from the Southeast can travel home safely ahead of Hurricane Irma, Members are advised that last votes for the week will now be called at approximately 12:00 PM [Friday] on the Senate Amendment

to H.R. 601 (Harvey disaster relief package)."

-- **THIS** is truly Donald Trump's first legislative deal. And it was done with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. It is expected to pass the House with mostly Democratic votes. **WHAT REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP THINKS:** They are annoyed, not angry. They see it as a self-inflicted wound for a president with big legislative plans that only Republicans can execute. If he wants to govern with Democrats, good luck, one senior GOP aide told us. Most Republicans and Democrats say they think this is a short-term phenomenon, though.

GREAT JOHN MCCAIN QUOTE in the Washington Post: "'Haven't seen anything like it before,' said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who has served in the Senate for three decades. Of Trump, McCain said: 'I have no way of divining his motives. I'm a pretty intelligent guy, but I don't understand this.'" <http://wapo.st/2eLdmy2>

THERE ARE ROUGHLY 40 LEGISLATIVE DAYS until this deal expires, and Congress has to renew government funding and pass another increase of the debt limit. **THERE ARE ROUGHLY 45** legislative days until the end of 2017, when Republicans say tax reform will be passed. We have not seen a bill. It's being written behind closed doors.

SNEAK PEEK -- THE WHITE HOUSE is hosting principals from conservative groups today to talk about the administration's plans for tax reform. Kellyanne Conway, Tony Sayegh and Sarah Huckabee Sanders also met with staffers from conservative outside groups Thursday to discuss tax reform messaging. "They were mainly pushing top-line messaging -- fairness, simplicity and 'un-rigging' the system. No policy details at all," said one attendee at Thursday's meeting.

-- **MEANWHILE -- @jimmykimmel:** "Dear @seanspicer - if I promise to look AT the camera this time, will you come to my show next week?" <http://bit.ly/2xgsizi> ... **@seanspicer:** "It's a deal, does next Wednesday work?" ... **@jimmykimmel:** "Perfect! I have no further comment."

TRUMP THE BACKSLAPPER -- "Trump, jovial after debt deal, turns meeting into a freewheeling affair," by Josh Dawsey: "In an Oval Office meeting with the New York and New Jersey congressional delegations, he repeatedly shook Schumer's hand and kept him after for a private session, his third chat with the Democrat in 30 hours. He praised Gov. Andrew Cuomo - who also attended the meeting and who has often torched Trump but without mentioning his name - for his work on the Tappan Zee Bridge and other New York projects. 'My governor!' he said to Cuomo, according to Rep. Peter King, a New York Republican.

"He told the room that New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie coached him in the 2016 presidential debates against Hillary Clinton, and that 'Hillary was easy' after dealing with 'Chris.' He wished Christie, whose birthday was Wednesday, a happy one. 'You should give him a tunnel for his birthday,' Schumer said, drawing laughs from the room, referring to the Gateway rail-expansion project. ...The president, though, had one gripe,

after his visit from the emir of Kuwait on Thursday afternoon. He was very impressed by the emir's plane but noted that it was longer than his - maybe even by 100 feet."

<http://politi.co/2xaScDJ>

-- **"Trump gets cozy with Democrats, and Republicans say 'I told you so,'"** by Eliana Johnson, Burgess Everett and Heather Caygle: "Just like that, he went from 'Cryin' Chuck' to the president's pal 'Chuck,' and she went from an 'incompetent' shepherd of House Democrats who has 'done a terrible job' to just 'Nancy.' ... Trump tends to govern more by sentiment than by substance, and he likes Schumer and Pelosi more than House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who have stomached him but never done a good job disguising the fact that he makes them nauseous." <http://politi.co/2wNQXYV>

WAPO's BOB COSTA and ASHLEY PARKER -- "Gingrich or Santorum as speaker? House conservatives plot mischief for the fall": "Several influential House conservatives are privately plotting ways to use the legislative calendar this fall to push their hard-line agenda - including quiet discussions about possibly mounting a leadership challenge to House Speaker Paul D. Ryan.

"The group has gone so far as to float the idea of recruiting former House speaker Newt Gingrich or former Pennsylvania senator Rick Santorum as potential replacements for Ryan (R-Wis.) should there be a rebellion. The Constitution does not require that an elected member of the House serve as speaker. While the chances that a non-House member could mount a credible threat to Ryan are exceedingly slim, the fact that the group has even toyed with the idea underscores their desire to create trouble for GOP leaders if they believe their demands are not being addressed." <http://wapo.st/2vS7eif>

-- **IF YOU'RE PAUL RYAN**, you feel pretty good about this.

WHAT GARY COHN IS READING -- "White House Considering at Least Six for Fed Chair," by Bloomberg's Craig Torres and Jen Jacobs: "The breadth of the search goes against the narrative that has taken hold in Washington and on Wall Street that the Fed chair nomination is a two-horse race between National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn and current Fed Chair Janet Yellen, whose term expires in February. Some of the other possible contenders include former Fed Governor Kevin Warsh, Columbia University economist Glenn Hubbard and Stanford University professor John Taylor, one of the people familiar said. Lawrence Lindsey, a former economic adviser to President George W. Bush, has been discussed. Former US Bancorp CEO Richard Davis and John Allison, the former CEO of BB&T Corp., have also been considered." <https://bloom.bg/2wMfqAm>

-- **"McCaul emerges as a leading candidate for DHS secretary,"** by Eliana Johnson and Anna Palmer: <http://politi.co/2xTyVER>

JOHN KELLY is continuing to put his stamp on the White House. Quinn Jones started Tuesday as executive assistant in the office of the White House chief of staff. Jones

previously served as special assistant in the office of the secretary of DHS.

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** How are Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers helping create the future in science, medicine and national security? Learn more: hpe.com/supercomputing *****

THE LATEST ON HURRICANE IRMA -- "Hurricane Irma slams Turks and Caicos on path to Florida," by AP's Evens Sanon and Danica Coto in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti: "Hurricane Irma battered the Turks and Caicos Islands early Friday as the fearsome Category 5 storm continued a rampage through the Caribbean that has killed at least 11 people, with Florida in its sights. Waves as high as 20 feet were expected in the Turks and Caicos. Communications went down as the storm slammed into the islands, and the extent of the devastation was unclear. The first hurricane warnings were issued for parts of southern Florida as the state braced for what could be a catastrophic hit over the weekend. Following in Irma's wake was Hurricane Jose, with some of the islands hit hardest by Irma in its expected path." <http://bit.ly/2eKRKBV>

-- **"It's like someone with a lawn mower from the sky has gone over the island,"** by WaPo's Anthony Faiola, Lindsey Bever and Andrew deGrandpre: <http://wapo.st/2wO3yeM>

-- **"Former presidents band together in call for Harvey, Irma relief aid,"** by Cristiano Lima: "The online campaign, called the 'One America Appeal,' brought together former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush and Jimmy Carter in a singular plea for donations to ongoing recovery efforts in Texas and likely future efforts in Florida and U.S. territories in the Caribbean in the wake of Irma." <http://politi.co/2vQWMHY> ... **The campaign** <http://bit.ly/2wN8XnO>

WHAT BEN RAY LUJAN IS READING -- "Rep. Dent won't seek re-election in 2018, according to source," by Alex Isenstadt and Kyle Cheney: "Pennsylvania Rep. Charlie Dent, a Republican who occupies a swing district, will not seek reelection in 2018, a source close to him confirmed. Dent's retirement comes the day after another swing district Republican, Washington Rep. Dave Reichert, announced he was calling it quits. Florida Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, another moderate, is also retiring. Democrats are certain to target all three seats in next year's midterms. Dent's announced departure comes one day after state Rep. Justin Simmons said he would challenge him in a primary." <http://politi.co/2xh7XtL>

THE TROUBLE WITH BERNIE... -- "Bernie backers' attacks on Democrats infuriate the party," by Gabe Debenedetti: "Prominent Democrats are increasingly riled by attacks from Bernie Sanders' supporters, whose demands for ideological purity are hurting the party ahead of the 2018 midterms and 2020 presidential election, they say. But it's not just the outside agitators that Democratic lawmakers, operatives, and activists are annoyed with: They're tired of what they see as the senator's hesitance to confront his own backers, either in public or through back channels.

"Tensions boiled over recently when a handful of Sanders loyalists bashed freshman Sen. Kamala Harris - a rising star in the party and potential 2020 hopeful - as an establishment tool. Democrats were also rankled that other prominent Sanders allies said support for single-payer health care should be a litmus test for candidates. In response, Democratic senators and outside groups have begun telling Sanders and friendly intermediaries that if he wants to be a leading figure for Democrats ahead of 2020's presidential election, he needs to get his supporters in line - or at least publicly disavow their more incendiary statements." <http://politi.co/2xaQVg8>

--SANDERS on COLBERT last night -- "What Bernie Sanders Wants Hillary To Do Next" -- 9-min. video <http://bit.ly/2xbkBd3> ... **"Bernie Sanders Tries To Say Something Nice About Trump"** -- 4-min. video <http://bit.ly/2wPg1Pu>

THE AMERICANS -- "The Fake Americans Russia Created to Influence the Election," by NYT's Scott Shane: "Sometimes an international offensive begins with a few shots that draw little notice. So it was last year when Melvin Redick of Harrisburg, Pa., a friendly-looking american with a backward baseball cap and a young daughter, posted on Facebook a link to a brand-new website. 'These guys show hidden truth about Hillary Clinton, George Soros and other leaders of the US,' he wrote on June 8, 2016. 'Visit #dcleaks website. It's really interesting!' Mr. Redick turned out to be a remarkably elusive character. No Melvin Redick appears in Pennsylvania records, and his photos seem to be borrowed from an unsuspecting Brazilian. But this fictional concoction has earned a small spot in history: the Redick posts that morning were among the first public signs of an unprecedented foreign intervention in American democracy. ...

"On Twitter, as on Facebook, Russian fingerprints are on hundreds or thousands of fake accounts that regularly posted anti-Clinton messages. Many were automated Twitter accounts, called bots, that sometimes fired off identical messages seconds apart - and in the exact alphabetical order of their made-up names, according to the Fireeye researchers. On Election Day, for instance, they found that one group of twitter bots sent out the hashtag #waragainstdemocrats more than 1,700 times." <http://nyti.ms/2jaJoZ5>

RUSSIA UPDATE -- "Mueller seeks interviews with WH staff over Trump Tower meeting statement," by CNN's Pamela Brown, Gloria Borger and Jeremy Diamond: "Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team has approached the White House about interviewing staffers who were aboard Air Force One when the initial misleading statement about Donald Trump Jr.'s meeting with a Russian lawyer at Trump Tower was crafted ... The special counsel's discussions with the White House are the latest indication that Mueller's investigators are interested in the response to the Trump Tower meeting. Mueller wants to know how the statement aboard Air Force One was put together, whether information was intentionally left out and who was involved." <http://cnn.it/2vKje1m>

-- BETTER LATE THAN NEVER -- "The DNC Begins Cybersecurity Effort To Try To

Make Sure 2016 Doesn't Happen Again," by BuzzFeed's Ruby Cramer: "On his second day at [the DNC], sitting in a meeting at the party's headquarters south of Capitol Hill, Raffi Krikorian looked around the room and realized he was the only technology staffer at the table. ... It's about a 'culture change inside the building' - to 'get everyone's guard up' and create an instinctive, daily cybersecurity reflex. ... Krikorian, 39, said he felt his 'continuous poking and prodding' was starting to work when the chair of the DNC, Tom Perez, walked into the CTO's office one day and announced that he had downloaded the encrypted messaging app, Signal. ... Later, Perez stood up at an all-staff meeting and told aides, "'If you guys talk to me, you're going to use Signal,' Krikorian recalled." <http://bzfd.it/2wNfu31>

COMING ATTRACTIONS? -- CNN's Jeremy Herb: "On Thursday, [Sen. Mark] Warner suggested that congress could play a role by passing legislation to put disclosure requirements on social media advertising similar to those for television commercials. 'An American can still figure out what content is being used on TV advertising ... but in social media there's no such requirement,' Warner said. 'There may be a reform process here. I actually think the social media companies would not oppose, because I think Americans, particularly when it comes to elections, ought to be able to know if there is foreign-sponsored content coming into their electoral process.'" <http://cnn.it/2gMNaUp>

WHAT CHRIS LICHT IS SMILING ABOUT -- "Hillary Clinton to Discuss Campaign and New Book on Colbert's 'Late Show'," by NYT's Matt Stevens: "The appearance will come one week after the book hits shelves. And the network promises that Mrs. Clinton will sit down with Mr. Colbert to discuss her writing, as well as 'her run for the White House in 2016' and 'her thoughts on the current administration.'" <http://nyti.ms/2xTHqzX>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: MATT VISER** has joined CNN as a political analyst. He's remaining at the Boston Globe as deputy Washington bureau chief. **MOLLY BALL** of The Atlantic and **MARGARET TALEV** of Bloomberg have also been named as CNN political analysts.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A Sept. 7 photo provided by the Dutch Defense Ministry shows storm damage in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in St. Martin. | Gerben Van Es/Dutch Defense Ministry via AP

THIS IS A BIG DEAL -- "Sara Netanyahu Expected to Be Indicted for Fraud in Pocketing \$110,000 in Goods," by Haaretz's Gidi Weitz: "Sara Netanyahu is expected to be indicted, pending a hearing, on charges of fraudulently receiving items worth

400,000 shekels (\$111,851), Haaretz has learned. Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit is expected to inform Netanyahu, wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, of the charges against her in a few weeks.

"Sara Netanyahu is suspected of ordering chef's meals at the prime minister's official residence, which is against regulations, and concealing the fact that she did so. She and her husband have accused the former chief caretaker of the official residence, Meni Naftali, who is currently leading protests against the prime minister, of inflating the residence's expenses." <http://bit.ly/2gP5FLt>

-- **ANSHEL PFEFFER (@AnshelPfeffer)**, Haaretz writer and Economist correspondent: "Took 3 years to indict Sara N on defrauding state of 400k worth of gourmet food. Investigation-indictment-trail of Bibi will take longer ... Even assuming Bibi is guilty, it will take the courts until 2020's to force him out of office. The Israeli public will judge him first. ... 2 ways Netanyahu is forced out of office before election: 1 His coalition partners (Kahlon, Bennett) say like Barak in '08 he has to go. ... 2. Netanyahu realizes he could be facing jail and signs plea bargain, resigns, gets reduced sentence. Both possible but for now unlikely."

THIS GUY -- "Prosecutors Seek to Revoke Martin Shkreli's Bail for Hillary Clinton 'Threats': Convicted former drug executive urged followers to 'grab a hair' from Clinton," by WSJ's Rebecca Davis O'Brien: "Federal prosecutors in Brooklyn have asked a judge to revoke bail for Martin Shkreli, the former pharmaceutical executive convicted last month on securities-fraud charges, citing Mr. Shkreli's 'escalating pattern of threats and harassment,' including an apparent threat to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"In a court filing late Thursday night, prosecutors asked U.S. District Judge Kiyo A. Matsumoto to have Mr. Shkreli detained until his sentencing. The filing came several days after Mr. Shkreli posted a message on his Facebook page in which he urged his followers to "grab a hair" from Mrs. Clinton while she is on her coming book tour. In the post, he offered \$5,000 per strand of hair.

"'[T]he defendant's threats create a risk of danger to the community,' prosecutors wrote, adding that his 'egregious public behavior shows that he has no respect for the law and will not abide by any conditions or combination of conditions for release.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2xaYjbk>

BUSINESS BURST -- "Equifax hack hits credit histories of up to 143 million Americans," by WaPo's Craig Timberg, Elizabeth Dwoskin and Brian Fung: "The credit reporting agency Equifax said Thursday that hackers gained access to sensitive personal data - Social Security numbers, birth dates and home addresses - for up to 143 million Americans, a major cybersecurity breach at a firm that serves as one of the three major clearinghouses for Americans' credit histories." <http://wapo.st/2xglxwn>

-- **WOW: "Three Equifax Managers Sold Stock Before Cyber Hack Revealed,"** by Bloomberg's Anders Melin: "Three Equifax Inc. senior executives sold shares worth

almost \$1.8 million in the days after the company discovered a security breach that may have compromised information on about 143 million U.S. consumers. The trio had not yet been informed of the incident, the company said.

"The credit-reporting service said late Thursday in a statement that it discovered the intrusion on July 29. Regulatory filings show that three days later, Chief Financial Officer John Gamble sold shares worth \$946,374 and Joseph Loughran, president of U.S. information solutions, exercised options to dispose of stock worth \$584,099. Rodolfo Ploder, president of workforce solutions, sold \$250,458 of stock on Aug. 2. None of the filings lists the transactions as being part of 10b5-1 scheduled trading plans."

<https://bloom.bg/2eS9H53>

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** A nation's strength is increasingly measured by its technical prowess. As the designer and builder of more supercomputers than any other company in the world, Hewlett Packard Enterprise is proud to lead the way in one of the future's most important technologies. Visit hpe.com/supercomputing to learn more about how Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers are helping create the future in science, medicine and national security.

OOPS -- "Trump lawyer Ty Cobb, fooled by 'email prankster,' asks for 'drone' in private emails slamming reporter," by Business Insider's Natasha Bertrand: "White House special counsel Ty Cobb engaged in a lengthy email exchange with a prankster posing as White House social media director Dan Scavino, during which Cobb asked whether there was 'any drone time left' when discussing a Business Insider reporter he described as 'insane.' ... A half hour later, the prankster reached out again -- this time to ask about 'the whole Russia situation.' ... 'I have great confidence there is nothing there implicating the President or the White House,' Cobb wrote. 'Manafort and Flynn have issues separate and apart from the WH that will cause the investigation to linger but am hoping we get a clean bill of health soon. Best, Ty.'" <http://read.bi/2vKgils>

DAVID IGNATIUS -- "Tillerson is working with China and Russia -- very, very quietly": "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has often been the silent man in the Trump foreign policy team. But out of the spotlight, he appears to be crafting a broad strategy aimed at working with China to resolve the North Korea crisis and with Russia to stabilize Syria and Ukraine. The Tillerson approach focuses on personal diplomacy, in direct contacts with Chinese and Russian leaders, and through private channels to North Korea. His core strategic assumption is that if the United States can subtly manage its relations with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin - and allow those leaders to take credit for successes - complex regional problems can be solved effectively. Tillerson appears unfazed by criticism that he has been a poor communicator and by recent talk of discord with President Trump."

<http://wapo.st/2wdJGju>

IF YOU READ ONE THING - EVAN OSNOS in The New Yorker, **"The Risk of Nuclear War with North Korea:** On the ground in Pyongyang: Could Kim Jong Un and Donald

Trump goad each other into a devastating confrontation?": "A few days after the July 4th missile test, [North Korean diplomat Pak Song Il] told me that I could book a flight to Pyongyang. I submitted a list of people I wanted to interview, including diplomats and Kim Jong Un himself. About the latter, Pak only laughed. (Kim has never given an interview.) After Pak stopped laughing, he said I could talk to other officials. ... James Clapper, the former director of National Intelligence, who visited Pyongyang in 2014, told me, 'The North Koreans are not going to give up their nuclear weapons. It's a non-starter.' The American national-security community is now nearly unanimous on this point, but the government cannot say so openly, because that would cede leverage in a future negotiation, and raise the risk that other countries will try to follow North Korea's example. ...

"In an e-mail, [H.R.] McMaster told me, 'Their provocations seem likely to increase-not decrease-over time. The North Koreans have also proliferated just about every capability they've ever produced, including chemical weapons and a nuclear reactor. Then there's the matter of what other countries do-in the region and beyond-when they see that a rogue regime developed nukes and got away with it.' ... "On the way to lunch one afternoon in Pyongyang, I noticed that the latest American threats had already been inscribed on the cityscape. A full-color billboard depicted a barrage of missiles descending on a bombed-out shell of the U.S. Capitol." <http://bit.ly/2wNmE7r>

WEST COAST WATCH -- "New primary challenger to Feinstein emerges," by California Playbooker Carla Marinucci: "Add another name to the list of progressive Democrats seriously considering a primary challenge to California's senior Senator Dianne Feinstein: wealthy financial entrepreneur Joseph N. Sanberg. Sanberg, 38 - co-founder of Aspiration.com, a socially-conscious investment firm, and a founding investor in Blue Apron ... Raised in Orange County by a single mom before he earned a fortune on Wall Street, Sanberg had been mulling a governor's run, sources familiar with his planning told POLITICO, and he delivered a speech to the last state Democratic convention that appeared to lay out a rationale for that race." <http://politi.co/2wNdC9G>

MEDIAWATCH -- MICHAEL CROWLEY'S NEW JOB -- Carrie Budoff Brown emails the POLITICO staff this morning at 4:25 a.m.: "We're thrilled to announce that Michael Crowley will take on the role of national security editor. Michael has established himself as one of the preeminent foreign policy thinkers in Washington in his nearly three years as Politico's senior foreign affairs correspondent and at Time Magazine before that. ... During the 2016 campaign, Michael was among the first reporters to explore the connections between Trump and Russia and his stories on the subject repeatedly broke fresh ground later revisited by others. ... Michael will continue to write in his new role and retain the title of senior foreign affairs correspondent."

-- **DEBORAH SOLOMON** has been hired as economics editor in the Washington bureau of the New York Times. She is currently a director at Brunswick Group and earlier spent 15 years at the WSJ._

LEWANDOWSKI TALKS TO PRESTON -- Corey Lewandowski sits down with CNN

senior political analyst Mark Preston on his SiriusXM show, "Full Stop with Mark Preston." Lewandowski talks about his relationship with Trump, the Russia investigation and the president's recent dealmaking with Democrats. The show airs Saturday at noon and Sunday at 5 p.m. on Sirius XM channel 124. ***Listen to him talk about the Russia investigation*** <http://bit.ly/2xQT5OX> ... ***And dealmaking with Democrats*** <http://bit.ly/2gPoJZO>

JAVELIN UPDATE -- "The Upstart D.C. Agents Making Waves in New York," by Rachel Deahl in Publishers Weekly: Keith "Urbahn" and [Matt] Latimer are no longer the new kids on the block. They have an 11-person-agency called Javelin in Arlington, Va., that has been behind some of the biggest nonfiction deals of the summer, including rumored seven-figure agreements for James Comey ... and Tucker Carlson ... And, although they both worked for Republicans in D.C., Latimer and Urbahn stressed that they are eager to work with liberals and conservatives. The deal they struck this summer for former DNC strategist Donna Brazile, selling her forthcoming book 'Hacks' to Hachette, may go a long way in proving this to potential Democratic clients." <http://bit.ly/2wOpeY6>

HAPPENING TONIGHT - JAKE TAPPER will be given the John F. Hogan Distinguished Service Award at the Radio Television Digital News Association's annual Excellence in Journalism conference in Anaheim. <http://bit.ly/2xRYwxS>

THE GLOBAL POLICY LAB: POLITICO Europe is launching Global Policy Lab, a first-of-its-kind experiment in collaborative journalism that is expected to produce new policy solutions and inform the public debate on key issues. POLITICO readers are among the most engaged and educated in the world, and the Global Policy Lab will tap into their experience and knowledge to develop solutions to pressing challenges. POLITICO is partnering with GE on the first installment, titled Engineering Growth, to look at the rise of digital manufacturing in Germany, Europe's largest economy, and explore ways to improve the economies of France and the United Kingdom. ***Sign up for the weekly newsletter*** <http://politi.co/2xaxcwS>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sean Spicer last night at Wolf Trap rocking out to Sting. He was with OMB's Jessica Anderson and Jim Herz and Brandt Anderson of Rep. Jim Banks' (R-Ind.) office. Spicer took numerous selfies with fellow patrons ... Shaun Donovan yesterday at Penn Station ... Star Wars/Indiana Jones actor Harrison Ford having lunch at il Canale in Georgetown, on Thursday. ***Pic with hostess Alona Nedorezova and Alessandro Farruggio (the son of il Canale's owner)*** <http://bit.ly/2eR9hfd> ... James Comey at McLean High for parents' night last night ...

... **Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)** at DCA carrying his own bags and talking on his cellphone "using the old shoulder/head lean" ... Sen. Bernie Sanders

(I-Vt.) last night in the TSA line at Newark airport - ***pic via @OliverDarcy, who headed to Miami last night to cover the media angle of the storm*** <http://bit.ly/2gNZ9AW>... Karen Knutson, global government affairs and policy leader for Baker Hughes, a GE Company, serving as a preliminary judge last night at the Miss America pageant <http://bit.ly/2xhuCpY>

THE FINANCIAL TIMES held an anniversary party last night at the Observatory at America's Square hosted by Lionel Barber, Gillian Tett and Demetri Sevastopulo, whose birthday was yesterday. The food included lamb chops, seared tuna and roast beef and boozy pink lemonade was also served. **SPOTTED:** Ambassadors of Belgium, Japan, India and Ireland, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), Norm Ornstein, Steve Clemons, Coach Kathy Kemper, Sally Quinn, Jane Harman, Andrea Mitchell and Alan Greenspan, Gary Cohn, Wilbur Ross, Steve Case, Sidney Blumenthal, UAE Ambassador Yousef Al-Otaiba, Juleanna Glover, Becca Glover, David Bolger, Paul Beckett, Dan DeLuce, Kevin Madden, Spencer Abraham.

SPOTTED at a Meridian International Center reception to honor and welcome newly credentialed Ambassadors and their spouses to Washington: Ambassadors from Bahrain, Colombia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Swaziland and Togo. President Stuart Holliday, Meridian Chair Carlos Gutierrez, Linda Douglas and John Phillips, Adrienne Arsht, Patrick Steel, Capricia Marshall, Catherine Stevens, Mitch Rose, Brian Toohey, Dan and Aviva Rosenthal, Josh Rogin, Tom Korologos, Megan Beyer, Ann Stock, Lloyd Hand, Hani and Cheryl Masri, Dwight Bush and Cam Henderson.

SUNDAY SO FAR -- NBC's "Meet the Press": Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). Panel: David Brody, David Brooks, former Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Md.), Hallie Jackson

--CNN's "State of the Union": Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.)

-- "Fox News Sunday": Panel: Brit Hume, Mo Elleithee, Gillian Turner, Juan Williams

TRANSITIONS -- PHIL MUSSER has accepted a new position with Boeing as SVP for communications. He is leaving as CEO of IMGE while **Phil Cox** has joined as the chairman of its board. **Gerrit Lansing, Gary Coby, Ethan Eilon, and Megan Foote** are also joining as partners at the firm. **Marty Obst** has joined as senior adviser.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- Peter Velz has moved to Albany and this week joined the State University of New York system as assistant vice chancellor for external affairs in the office of Chancellor Kristina Johnson. Velz served nearly five years in the Obama White House, mostly as a press staffer, and finished Jan. 19 as special assistant to the communications director.

-- Alexandra Nunez Costello, Obama State Department alum and former Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) political director, is joining the Center for Law and Social Policy as its first-ever director of legislative affairs.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Scott Bland, editor of Politico's Campaign Pro and host of the Nerdcast, and **Gina Bland**, an elementary school teacher, welcomed Samuel Bland, who was born on Eclipse Day. "He and mom are doing great." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2gNQiiS>

-- **Jennifer Wishon**, White House correspondent for CBN News, and **C. Todd Gilbert**, House Majority Leader designee for the Virginia House of Delegates and attorney in the Shenandoah Valley, recently welcomed Christopher "Grant" Gilbert, who was "born with a healthy set of lungs." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2f9IZCY>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): DCCC staffer Sam Iacobellis, pride of Manchester, Conn. and UPenn (hat tip: Lisa Moody, who was on time)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Steve McMahon, co-founder and CEO at Purple Strategies, celebrating with Cynthia and "a quiet dinner at our neighborhood Italian bistro, Pulcinella's in McLean. It's the local Italian haunt not just for us, but also for Gingrich, Comey and Ovechkin, all of whom we've seen there repeatedly and recently." **A fun fact about Steve:** "Whenever I can, I try to sneak off and play ice hockey, which is maybe the only thing I enjoy as much as politics. And now that I'm an empty-nester, with more time to skate, I'm hoping my play will improve-and so are my teammates." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2wOXDWO>

BIRTHDAYS: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis ... Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.) ... Richard Cullen, EVP of public affairs at FP1 Strategies (h/t Ryan Williams) ... Madigan Schmidt ... Jonathan Rosen, de Blasio adviser and principal at BerlinRosen ... Morgan Hook, SVP at SKD Knickerbocker ... Jeremy Kirkpatrick ... Will Brunelle ... Sharon Páez, partner at Hilltop Public Solutions ... Harry Liberman ... Politico's Rhea Beal and Judy Diaz ... former Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) ... Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) ... Jillian Harding ... Andrei Berman ... Matthew McGregor, director of digital at Precision Strategies ... Michael Pratt ... WSJ's Akane Otani ... Zack Ford ... Jason Mattera ... Lex Wexner, owner of L Brands ... Howard Mark Lorber, chairman of Douglas Elliman (h/ts Jewish Insider) ...

... **Ali Pardo**, Rep. Ann Wagner (R-Mo.) spox and GW, Rubio and RNC alum (h/ts Rebecca Coffman and Ninio Fetalvo) ... Samantha Osborne Reynolds, chief digital officer at the RNC (hubby tip: Matthias) ... Andrew Golis ... Jill McClain ... Dan Gurley ... Dylan McDowell ... Will Batson ... Axios' Alayna Treene ... Marco Romeo ... Kim Coalter ... Mike Danylak ... former Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) ... Steph Tong, co-founder of Juva Therapy and a McKinsey alum ... Jaime Lennon ... Jasi Edwards ... Janelle Kovacevich ... Sara Fellenz ... former Clinton aide Lenore Cho ... Nick Bouknight ... Al Hubbard ... Brookly McLaughlin ... Andrea Hoffman ... Diedra Henderson ... Paul Fletcher ... Charlotte Spears Ivancic ... Jillian Wikler Black ... Michael Johns ... Brandon Wright ... JoAnne Anton ... David Dixon ... Gail Leftwich Kitch ... Don Schimanski (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)
08/09/2017 06:46 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. DONALD TRUMP on North Korea, in a 1999 interview with the great Tim Russert on NBC's "Meet the Press": **RUSSERT:** "You say ... as president, you would be willing to launch a preemptive strike against North Korea's nuclear capability." **TRUMP:** "First I'd negotiate. I would negotiate like crazy. And I'd make sure that we tried to get the best deal possible. Look, Tim. If a man walks up to you on a street in Washington, because this doesn't happen, of course, in New York ... and puts a gun to your head and says give me your money, wouldn't you rather know where he's coming from before he had the gun in his hand?"

"And these people, within three or four years, are going to be having nuclear weapons, they're going to have those weapons pointed all over the world, and specifically at the United States, and wouldn't you be better off solving this really ... the biggest problem the world has is nuclear proliferation ... If that negotiation doesn't work, you better solve the problem now than solve it later, Tim ... Jimmy Carter, who I really like, he went over there, so soft, these people are laughing at us." ...

RUSSERT: "Taking out their nuclear potential would create a fallout." **TRUMP:** "Tim, do you know that this country gave them nuclear reactors, free fuel for 10 years. We virtually tried to bribe them into stopping and they're continuing to what they're doing. And they're laughing at us, they think we're a bunch of dummies. I'm saying that we have to do something to stop." **RUSSERT:** "If the military told you, 'Mr. Trump, you can't do this'." **TRUMP:** "You're giving me two names. I don't know. You want to do it in five years when they have warheads all over the place, every one of them pointing to New York City, to Washington and every one of our -- is that when you want to do it? Or do you want to do something now?" **2-min video** <http://bit.ly/2uFdOU7>

-- **NOTE** : Trump talks about being laughed at -- just like he does today. But he -- along with many others -- was right about the escalating threat.

THE LATEST ON NORTH KOREA ...

-- **"Trump, North Korea trade escalating threats of fire,"** by AP's Foster Klug and Matthew Pennington in Seoul, South Korea: "In an exchange of threats, U.S. President Donald Trump warned Pyongyang of 'fire and fury like the world has never seen' and the North's military claimed Wednesday it was examining plans for attacking Guam. The high-level tit-for-tat follows reports that North Korea has mastered a crucial technology needed to strike the United States with a nuclear missile. Despite regular North Korean threats against Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific about 2,100 miles ... from the Korean Peninsula, it is extremely unlikely that Pyongyang would risk the assured annihilation of its revered leadership with a pre-emptive attack on U.S. citizens. It's also not clear how reliable North Korea's mid-range missiles would be in an attack against a distant target given the relatively few times they've been tested.

"Even so, the competing threats and Trump's use of North Korea-style rhetoric -- Pyongyang has long vowed to reduce Seoul to a 'sea of fire' -- raise already high animosity and heighten worries that a miscalculation might spark conflict between the rivals. The North Korean army said in a statement that it is studying a plan to create an 'enveloping fire' in areas around Guam with medium- to long-range ballistic missiles. The statement described Andersen Air Force Base on Guam as a 'beachhead' for a potential U.S. invasion of North Korea it needed to neutralize. It was unlikely the North's threat was a direct response to Trump's comments to the camera at his golf course in Bedminster, New Jersey." <http://bit.ly/2vMwlwh>

-- **NYT's** Julie Hirschfeld Davis: "President Trump's warning on Tuesday that North Korea would experience 'fire and fury like the world has never seen' if it continued threatening the United States was a remarkable escalation of military rhetoric with little precedent in the modern era, historians and analysts said. Mr. Trump's menacing remarks echoed the tone and cadence of President Harry S. Truman, who, in a 1945 address announcing that the United States had dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima, urged the Japanese to surrender, warning that if they did not, 'they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.'" <http://nyti.ms/2vN1yoH>

-- **WSJ**: "Meanwhile, a senior Trump administration official said Tuesday that Washington shouldn't assume it will be able to contain a North Korea with nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles through traditional deterrence methods. 'We are not going to allow North Korea to hold American cities hostage,' the official said." <http://on.wsj.com/2wGHaml>

FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY LEON PANETTA via California Playbooker Carla Marinucci: "You've got two bullies chiding each other with outrageous comments - and it

doesn't help the situation in terms of trying to resolve something that has to be resolved peacefully ... because the consequences of nuclear war would be devastating ... The question is: 'Does (Trump) get so frustrated with the North Korean leader -- who's yelling every other day -- that he feels that somehow the North Korean leader is attacking his manhood?'" <http://politi.co/2uFpZAK>

PACIFIC (GUAM) DAILY NEWS: "The U.S. Air Force has said that members of the 37th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, deployed to Guam from Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota are ready to 'fight tonight' from Guam. During a 10-hour mission from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, on Monday, two B-1s were joined by Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15s as well as Republic of Korea Air Force KF-16 fighter jets. 'These flights with Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) demonstrate solidarity between Japan, ROK and the U.S. to defend against provocative and destabilizing actions in the Pacific theater,' according to a release from the Air Force."

-- ALSO IN THE GUAM NEWSPAPER: "'This is not the time to panic,' [Gov. Eddie] Calvo told reporters during a press conference at Adelup on Wednesday afternoon. 'There have been many statements out there that have been made by a very bellicose leader, but at this point there's been no change in the security situation here on Guam. I've gotten assurances from all levels, both local command and Washington, D.C., that this island will be defended.' ...

"Guam Homeland Security Advisor George Charfauros said the island is protected by the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, missile system permanently stationed at Andersen Air Force Base as well as other missile defense systems in the region. 'All of those put together, there's .00001 percent chance of that missile getting through that layer,' Charfauros said during the conference." <http://bit.ly/2wGLrWL>

-- WHAT THEY'RE SAYING AT THE PENTAGON ...

-- @nancyayoussef: "Overheard at the Pentagon, in response to Trump's promise of fury for NK: 'Don't worry, DoD took away the codes. The briefcase is empty.'" ...

@jacqklimas: "Overheard at the Pentagon: 'I'm selling fallout shelters after work if anyone is interested.'"

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** If you know only one fact about rising drug costs, know this one: drug makers set prices for prescription drugs. To help manage nearly double-digit price increases, employers, unions and government programs use PBMs to negotiate lower net prices to help curb costs for employers and patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

THE COST OF THAT FOXCONN/WISCONSIN DEAL -- MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL: "Wisconsin taxpayers would need until 2043 to recoup nearly \$3 billion in Foxconn payments," by Jason Stein and Patrick Marley: "The analysis by the Legislature's nonpartisan budget office determined that if the Foxconn Technology Group plant operated at full expected employment levels -- and attracted large numbers

of jobs to Wisconsin through supplier companies -- then state taxpayers would recoup their investment in 2043.

"In Foxconn's industry -- the competitive world of consumer electronics -- the market could see multiple upheavals over those two and a half decades. The report by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau relied on projected jobs and investment numbers generated by Gov. Scott Walker's administration and a consulting firm paid by Foxconn." <http://bit.ly/2fsXfc6>

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- Steven Shepard: "[T]rump's approval rating [has slipped] to the lowest point of his young presidency. While he's confounded the polls before, it's the trendline that should be most worrisome to the White House. Only 40 percent of registered voters approve of the job Trump is doing as president, the new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll shows, down from a high-water mark of 52 percent in March. And the percentage who approve strongly -- one way to measure the size of Trump's most fervent supporters -- is also at a new low: just 18 percent." <http://politi.co/2vMTuEq>

-- A MEASURE OF GOOD NEWS FOR TRUMP, via Shepard: "Voters support most elements of President Donald Trump's proposal to scale back legal immigration to the United States and change the criteria by which the U.S. admits immigrants, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll." <http://politi.co/2uowQic>

TOP-ED -- WSJ VS. BANNON -- "McMaster and the Commander: The NSC adviser is the latest target of Steve Bannon's media friends": "The latest target has been H.R. McMaster, the three-star general who took over as national security adviser after President Trump fired Michael Flynn. Lt. Gen. McMaster has come in for abuse for favoring more troops and a new strategy in Afghanistan, for warning that Vladimir Putin is no friend of America, and for advising that Mr. Trump not precipitously withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal. He also recently dismissed some NSC staff members who were brought on by Mr. Flynn and are said to be allies of Mr. Bannon. ...

"Somehow the Bannon brigades outside the White House decided to assail the general as insufficiently pro-Israel and not hostile enough to Islamic State, among other calumnies. The latter is especially preposterous since then Colonel McMaster developed the counter-insurgency strategy in Tal Afar that was the prototype for the 2007 'surge' that won the Iraq War. ...

"Mr. Trump may worry about the damage Mr. Bannon and his allies could do to his Administration if he is no longer part of the White House team. But if his minions continue to vilify his colleagues inside the White House, how can anyone tell the difference?" <http://on.wsj.com/2vIMMTH>

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP endorsed Luther Strange in the Alabama primary on Twitter. **@realDonaldTrump** at 9:16 p.m.: "Senator Luther Strange has done a great job representing the people of the Great State of Alabama. He has my complete and

total endorsement!"

-- TALE OF TWO DISCLOSURES: The Senate Conservatives Fund, which is supporting Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) in the Aug. 15 primary, dropped \$45,123 yesterday in his favor. The Senate Leadership Fund, which is supporting Strange, dropped \$629,459 against Brooks and Roy Moore on the same day.

MCCONNELL HITS BACK -- "McConnell criticizes Trump's 'excessive expectations'," by CNN's Ryan Nobles: "Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell offered some of his toughest criticism yet for President Donald Trump in a speech Monday to a Rotary Group in northern Kentucky. McConnell, who has been relatively measured in his previous critiques of the White House, argued the President's approach to the legislative process is leading to an inaccurate impression of how Congress works. 'Our new president, of course, has not been in this line of work before,' said McConnell according to CNN affiliate WCPO which covered the event. 'I think he had excessive expectations about how quickly things happen in the democratic process.'

"McConnell made the case that the Congress is working as it should and that voters should allow the process to play itself out before passing judgment. 'Part of the reason I think people think we're under-performing is because of too many artificial deadlines unrelated to the reality of the legislature which may have not been understood.' ... And while McConnell told the audience Monday that he believes the lines of communication between the executive and legislative branch remain strong, he did admit that he wished the President would tweet less and stay on message more. 'I've been and I will be again today, not a fan of tweeting and I've said that to him privately,' McConnell said. 'I think it would be helpful if the President would be a little more on message.'"

<http://bit.ly/2wsWtzO>

-- IT'S WORTH NOTING : McConnell criticizing Trump is indeed a shift. His comments come after Trump took to Twitter to criticize Senate rules after the GOP health care bill failed -- a trap McConnell doesn't much appreciate. The comments also represent the growing frustration in Congress that Trump just doesn't get how Washington works and that the Hill could end the year without a single meaningful legislative achievement in an all GOP D.C.

SHOT -- @seanhannity at 3:11 p.m.: "In light of dangerous NKorea threat, I'm stopping all petty political disagreements for at least next 12 hours. Let's see what others do."

CHASER -- @seanhannity at 11:03 p.m. and again at 5:30 a.m.: "@SenateMajLdr No Senator, YOU are a WEAK, SPINELESS leader who does not keep his word and you need to Retire!" ***This was in response to the above story, which has McConnell saying Trump's expectations were out of line.*** ... This is extraordinarily strong language from Hannity, a Trump friend and supporter.

ELIANA JOHNSON: UNDERSTANDING PENCE WORLD -- "Mike Pence's real power move": "The vice president's office hasn't been one of the competing power

centers in President Donald Trump's faction-riven White House - but the recent arrival of Nick Ayers, the veteran campaign operative now serving as Mike Pence's chief of staff, is starting to change that. Ayers' hire, according to interviews with eight current and former administration officials, was less about a secret campaign to challenge Trump in 2020 and more about helping the vice president - who, at just 58, has a political future ahead of him in the post-Trump era - preserve his future political options, whatever they may be.

"A veteran political operative, Ayers had for months been quietly warning the vice president that Trump's troubles could cause collateral damage and that he needed to take a more aggressive posture on a range of issues to ensure he enters the post-Trump era on solid ground, according to two White House officials. ... Among the reasons Ayers didn't join the White House in January was a long-running feud with former White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, who reportedly blocked his ascension to the chairmanship of the [RNC] in December and, according to one White House aide, worked to keep him out of the administration. ...

"Ayers is around to ensure that if Trump is out of the picture for one reason or another his man will be ready. He is elbowing his way into meetings at which the vice president was previously unrepresented and, while [Josh] Pitcock would limit himself to delivering brief updates on Pence's upcoming events, Ayers freely shares his views on the White House's messaging and political strategy. He is making himself a ubiquitous figure, pacing the hallways, talking on his cellphone. 'He walks around like he owns the place,' said a senior White House aide." <http://politi.co/2vNGIGu>

THE SQUAD -- "Trump Aides Copy Bush 'Red Team' Strategy for Tax Overhaul Fight," by Bloomberg's Justin Sink, Jennifer Jacobs and Sahil Kapur: "[A] weekly, all-hands-on-deck meeting ... usually held around a long wooden table in the Roosevelt Room steps away from the Oval Office, include[s] representatives of major power centers within the administration: the Office of American Innovation, led by Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, the Treasury Department, headed by Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Vice President Mike Pence's staff and Gary Cohn's National Economic Council. Inside the White House, the assemblage is known as 'The Red Team,' a term used in former President George W. Bush's administration for similar groups organized for major fights. It's taken from military and corporate parlance for a team that explicitly tests strategy from an opponent's perspective. But the Trump team is using the label more broadly to convey a sense of urgency and close coordination." <https://bloom.bg/2wGNcDz>

-- JUST A THOUGHT: They might want to include the legislative affairs team, which is working the Hill on a daily basis.

THE REALITY -- "Trump deportations lag behind Obama levels," by Ted Hesson: "The U.S. is deporting people more slowly than during the Obama administration despite President Donald Trump's vast immigration crackdown, according to new data from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. From Feb. 1 to June 30, ICE officials removed 84,473 people -- a rate of roughly 16,900 people per month. If deportations

continue at the same clip until the fiscal year ends Sept. 30, federal immigration officials will have removed fewer people than they did during even the slowest years of Barack Obama's presidency. In fiscal year 2016, ICE removed 240,255 people from the country, a rate of more than 20,000 people per month." <http://politi.co/2vifRRu>

THE DOUGH -- "Special counsel Robert Mueller's finances go public," by Josh Gerstein and Darren Samuelsohn: "When special counsel Robert Mueller took his new job in May, he gave up a law firm partnership in which he had made almost \$3.5 million since the beginning of 2016, according to a financial disclosure released by the Justice Department on Tuesday.

"Mueller's client list from his former firm, WilmerHale, reads like a who's who of America's most prominent businesses, including Facebook, Apple, Intel, Sony Pictures, Booz Allen Hamilton and the National Football League. Mueller was also on the paid-speaking circuit in recent years, addressing businesses like Goldman Sachs, charities and lecture series, as well as lobbying groups like the Nuclear Energy Institute and the Insurance Information Institute. Mueller's speaking engagements brought him about \$241,000 since the beginning of 2016, the report says. ...

"Mueller's disclosure lists assets belonging to him and his spouse valued at a total of between \$4.2 million and \$15.2 million. ... Mueller's legal work for Facebook is notable because that company could potentially hold valuable data for his investigation." <http://politi.co/2uEN5qH>

-- **"President Trump has sent private messages to Russia special counsel Robert Mueller,"** by USA Today's David Jackson and Kevin Johnson: "President Trump has publicly called the widening federal investigation into Russia's election meddling a 'witch hunt.' But through his lawyer, Trump has sent private messages of 'appreciation' to special counsel Robert Mueller. 'He appreciates what Bob Mueller is doing,' Trump's chief counsel John Dowd told USA TODAY in an interview Tuesday. 'He asked me to share that with him and that's what I've done.' ... Dowd says he has passed along the president's messages expressing 'appreciation and greetings' to the special counsel. ... [T]he Trump legal camp cast the communications as a sign that the president is willing to cooperate with Mueller." <https://usat.ly/2vMdHdF>

-- **Mariam Khan (@MKhan47):** "The Trump Campaign handed over 20,000 documents to Senate Judiciary investigators on August 2, a Judiciary spokesman confirms to @ABC."

THE JUICE ...

-- **AMERICAN ACTION NETWORK** is launching a \$2.5 million TV ad campaign to push tax reform. The new ad, titled "Laid Off," features a former Ohio metal worker and father telling his story about why he lost his job due to the outdated U.S. tax code. The ad will air on national cable and 24 congressional districts. **List of districts** <http://bit.ly/2hldwdD> ... **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2uoL5HT>

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK:** The RNC is outsourcing some of its surrogate media booking to GuestBooker, an outside vender. This is an unusual setup for a political operation in D.C. Ryan Mahoney, the committee's communications director, says the RNC is putting a bigger emphasis on putting people on air to tout Republican positions and advocate for President Donald Trump. They are also more than doubling the size of their communications operation, they say.

NYT'S STEPHEN CROWLEY HANGS IT UP -- *interview, with 23 photos on one page* <http://nyti.ms/2uFJ2Kt>

--**SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD INTERVIEW -- "What it's like to be President Trump's White House photographer"** -- PBS Newshour <http://to.pbs.org/2uocNAi>

PLAYBOOK ON THE ROAD -- With everyone headed out of town on vacation, or back to their districts, we are starting a new August feature: Playbook on the Road. Send us a photo of yourself, or others reading Playbook during your travels this month and we will feature five photos every Friday. Participating Playbookers will automatically be entered into a drawing to win a signed cartoon by POLITICO's Pulitzer winning cartoonist Matt Wuerker. Email photos to Daniel at daniel@politico.com. Or, Tweet them to @playbookplus with the hashtag #PlaybookLoyal.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Vietnam Defense Minister Gen. Ngo Xuan Lich participate in an enhanced honor cordon at the Pentagon on Aug. 8. | Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

DEPT OF THAT'S NOT HOW THIS WORKS -- JOSH RAFFEL PROFILE -- "Behind The Jared And Ivanka PR Machine: When reporters are working on stories that involve Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, they hear from Josh Raffel, a tough, former New York City flack now inside the White House," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "On a Thursday late last month, shortly before the New Yorker published its famous interview with Anthony Scaramucci, Jared Kushner paused in the West Wing to chat with ABC's Jonathan Karl and his daughter, who worked as a CNN summer intern. Kushner told Karl's daughter that it must be interesting to be a reporter, because you always have to figure out who is going to lie to you, according to two people familiar with the matter. When Kushner thought he noticed another reporter, New York magazine's Olivia Nuzzi, recording the exchange, he was startled and said it was off the record. He then uncomfortably asked Nuzzi to delete the recording, which she did not do.

"A few minutes later, after Kushner had left, a Secret Service agent and a press assistant approached Nuzzi and told her she was not permitted to record. (She is.) The

exchange offered a brief look into Kushner's awkwardness sometimes when it comes to dealing with the press. Luckily for him, it's a responsibility that typically falls to a 33-year-old White House spokesperson and key lieutenant: Josh Raffel. A product of the ruthless New York corporate arena, Raffel conducts the 'blocking and tackling' for Kushner and his wife, Ivanka Trump, routinely making the couple available for off-the-record chats, sources say. He's smart and good-humored, and reporters who've battled with him say he comfortably oscillates between friendly chatter and aggressiveness. One White House reporter said he's the most competent staffer in the West Wing."

<http://bzfd.it/2frUojB>

SAME HERE -- "Trump gets a folder full of positive news about himself twice a day," by Vice's Alex Thompson: "Twice a day since the beginning of the Trump administration, a special folder is prepared for the president. The first document is prepared around 9:30 a.m. and the follow-up, around 4:30 p.m. Former Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and former Press Secretary Sean Spicer both wanted the privilege of delivering the 20-to-25-page packet to President Trump personally, White House sources say. These sensitive papers ... don't contain top-secret intelligence or updates on legislative initiatives. Instead, the folders are filled with screenshots of positive cable news chyrons (those lower-third headlines and crawls), admiring tweets, transcripts of fawning TV interviews, praise-filled news stories, and sometimes just pictures of Trump on TV looking powerful ...

"The process of assembling the folder begins at the [RNC's] 'war room,' which has expanded from 4 to 10 people since the GOP won the White House. ... Every 30 minutes or so, the staffers send the White House Communications Office an email with chyron screenshots, tweets, news stories, and interview transcripts. ... On days when there aren't enough positive chyrons, communications staffers will ask the RNC staffers for flattering photos of the president. ... Contacted by VICE News, Spicer disputed the nature of the folder. 'While I won't comment on materials we share with the president, this is not accurate on several levels,' he said in an email. Asked what about the story was inaccurate, Spicer did not respond." <http://bit.ly/2vimIzM>

WHAT ZI OJAKLI IS READING -- "Bill Ford Thinks His Company Lacks Vision-and That He Can Fix It," by WSJ's Christina Rogers and Joann S. Lublin: "Two decades ago, when Bill Ford took the helm of his family's auto company, he was ready to talk about the coming shift to electric vehicles and the eventual demise of car ownership. His ideas were dismissed. At one point, when he wanted Ford Motor Co. to invest in developing alternative transportation, 'the board kind of looked at me like once again I was over my ski tips,' Mr. Ford said in an interview.

"As years went by, other auto makers and tech companies got on board with his way of thinking. They overtook Ford in electric and self-driving technologies, and in April, Tesla Inc., which sells stylish electric cars, passed Ford in investor value, a dashboard warning signaling Wall Street's skepticism about the growth prospects of traditional car makers. Ford was being left behind, and the man with his name on the door, who for years had largely deferred to management, decided to intervene."

<http://on.wsj.com/2unYFat>

******* A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):**

Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers and other health care purchasers; however, the list price - the important starting point for those negotiations -- continues to rise, at a rate of nearly ten percent in 2016 alone. Increased competition, faster reviews of generics and biosimilars and ending anti-competitive practices can also bring down the cost of medications for patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

BEHIND THE SCENES -- GOTHAM WATCH -- "Emails reveal de Blasio bullies his staffers," by N.Y. Post's Michael Gartland: "Mayor de Blasio is an imperious bully of a boss who threatens his underlings with dire punishment if they fail to meet his demands, emails obtained by The Post reveal. 'What do I need to get you guys to follow a direct order? Do you need to experience consequences?' he threatened in one 2015 diatribe. 'I'm not raising this again: fix it, or I will [have] no choice but to find a way to penalize people. Not my preference, but I won't have my instructions ignored.' The emails show de Blasio blowing his top at nearly a dozen aides for failing to make sure phonetic versions of challenging words were included in his speeches and talking points."
<http://nyp.st/2wsHmWX>

NICK BILTON in Vanity Fair, "Mark Zuckerberg's Political Ambitions Are Grander Than You Think: He's probably going to seek higher office one day, and it looks like he's already preparing for the job": "Over the years, I've spent some time with Zuckerberg, and I always got the feeling that he truly believed there wasn't a problem that technology couldn't solve. ... Lately, however, it appears that he has realized that there is another darker side to all of this technology. ...

"Zuckerberg's greatest challenge ... is that his profound wealth and success have made it far harder to understand what aggrieves most Americans. They aren't just worried about what Trump will do to our country-or whether our planet is overheating, or if we're playing a short-sighted game of chicken with the North Koreans, or if the Democrats (or Republicans) have any viable alternatives-but they are also worried about how they will be able to pay for their kids to go to college, or for winter clothes, or, in some cases, for the very next meal. ...

"And yet, at the same time, his skills and experience have put him in a rare position to remedy so much of what ails us. As he evidenced at Harvard, Zuckerberg appears aware of these existential fears. But the big question that hangs over his head-and it's the one that will determine not only whether he could win elected office, but also what kind of company Facebook becomes-is whether he can solve them. And if Zuckerberg's actions say anything, that is exactly what he's thinking about right now."
<http://bit.ly/2vEdWrv>

DEEP DIVE -- "How Peter Thiel's Secretive Data Company Pushed Into Policing," by Steven Levy in Backchannel on Wired.com: <http://bit.ly/2uFrHI5>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Sinclair Deal Draws Unlikely Opponent: Conservative News Media,"

by NYT's Sydney Ember: "The Sinclair Broadcast Group's proposed acquisition of Tribune Media has ignited expected opposition from left-leaning advocacy groups that deplore news media consolidation and the right-leaning commentary the company pushes out to its local television stations. But a more unlikely group has recently joined the chorus of critics: conservative media outlets that say that the merger will limit competition and wipe out independent voices. This week, Newsmax, whose founder, Christopher Ruddy, is a close associate of President Trump, filed a petition urging the Federal Communications Commission to deny the Sinclair-Tribune combination. One America News Network, a cable network that has championed the Trump administration's agenda, and The Blaze, a news and entertainment network started by Glenn Beck, have also pressed for a careful assessment of the merger."

<http://nyti.ms/2vkU3CZ>

HOLLYWOODLAND -- L.A. TIMES: "Disney to offer two streaming services and end its movie distribution agreement with Netflix,"

by Daniel Miller and Meg James: "Walt Disney Co. will launch two Netflix-like streaming services -- one for sports and another for films and television shows - in one of the boldest moves by an entertainment company to address the changing media landscape. The stand-alone subscription services would appeal to younger audiences who are turning away from traditional media and flocking to Netflix and other digital platforms. The ESPN service, which would be available next year, is expected to feature 10,000 sporting events annually, among them Major League Baseball games. The Disney-branded film and TV offering, set to debut in 2019, would include original content developed by Walt Disney Studios."

<http://lat.ms/2frWgIV>

POLITICO AGENDA 2020 - "America's Mind-Body Disconnect: The mind and the body are connected, but the U.S. health care system has long treated them as separate-with separate doctors, separate hospitals, separate payment systems. The segregation of mental health care from the rest of medical care is arguably the most costly, both financially and in terms of patient health. With new pressure to find ways to bend the curve of health care costs, and the growing burden of chronic disease and worker disability, solving these problems will take more than money; it will require changing the culture of medicine." <http://politi.co/2kGHR3L>

--**"The doctor will analyze you now:** A health center for native Alaskans brought mental and physical care under one roof, with impressive results. Why isn't it more popular?" by Joanne Silberberner <http://politi.co/2vMQFTN>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Ernest Moniz entering the Bombay Club restaurant on Tuesday afternoon ... IMF Director Christine Lagarde carrying flowers yesterday in D.C.'s West End

SPOTTED at a party last night for Advoc8 -- a marketing firm -- celebrating their new headquarters: Erica Orden, Jill Barclay, Abe Adams, Scott and Tory Sendak, Zeke Miller, Phil Elliott, Cassie Spodak, Jon Adams, Josh and Melissa Sharp, Sam Osbourne, John Legittino, Derek Flowers and Alex Moe, Lauren Pratapas, Ryan Williams, Brooke Brogan, Annie Starke, Laura and Remington Howard, Allie Brandenburger, Anna Sugg, Matt Gorman, Alyssa Moyer, Liam O'Rourke and Ashley Burns.

WELCOME BACK! Carl Leubsdorf, Dallas Morning News columnist and one of the original "Boys on the Bus," is back at work after having a new heart valve installed last week. (h/t Susan Page)

HAPPY 50th ANNIVERSARY to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Mary Sessions. He's celebrating with dinner with his wife. His daughter is also coming in from Seattle today. (h/t son-in-law John Walk, who works in the White House counsel's office)

TRANSITIONS - OBAMA ALUMNI -- Ashley Lewis joined the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs as the Democratic press secretary. She most recently was the director of media relations for Export-Import Bank. ... **Wendy R. Anderson** has been hired as general manager for defense and national security at SparkCognition, which is an AI company. She was chief of staff to former Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker and also has held senior positions at DoD.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- @AJDelgado13: "Dear friends: Beyond thrilled to share with you that I'm now the proud mother of a beautiful son (!), William!!! Born 7/10".

-- **Christine Schaffer**, director of scheduling for Sen. Ted Cruz, and **Bobby Babcock**, manager of government relations at Van Scoyoc Associates, welcomed Lucy Elizabeth Babcock, 7.5 lbs 20 inches. **Pics** <http://politi.co/2vieBh3> ... <http://politi.co/2vDDqoE>

-- **BUSH ALUMNI --** Bush 43 Labor Department alumnus **Kevin Doyle**, now a strategic partner at HBW Resources with Wexford Strategies and also Florida executive director for Consumer Energy Alliance, and **Gwen Carmichael**, a former legislative aide to the Florida House of Representatives, recently welcomed Hayesley Marie Carmichael-Doyle. **Pics** <http://politi.co/2ulndVu> ... <http://politi.co/2hG3fyO> ... <http://politi.co/2hGmTe8> ... <http://politi.co/2vg8zOg>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Politico Europe's Charles Cooper

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Bill Burton, California managing director at SKDKnickerbocker and the pride of Buffalo, is 4-0. **How he got his start in politics:** "My first moments in politics were going to school board meetings with my Dad. At those meetings, when I was 11, he taught me that every single person has the power to make a difference. And on those nights -- late after his shift at Pohlman Foundry in Buffalo -- he often did." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2uo6BIE>

BIRTHDAYS: Ken Vogel is 42 ... Kathleen Matthews ... WSJ's Julian Barnes, now based in Brussels, is 46 ... Michael Fletcher, senior writer for ESPN's The Undeclared ... Hoda Kotb is 53 ... Chris Cuomo is 47 ... Brian F. Keane, president of SmartPower ... Tim Tagaris, partner at Revolution Messaging ... Isaac Lederman, SKDK alum, now at LSE ... Robert Traynham, VP of comms at the Bipartisan Policy Center (h/t Blain Rethmeier) ... Amanda Isaacson ... The Fritz twins - Skylar and Whitney ... Jarrett Morrell ... T. J. Clark is 22 ... Leila Sepehri Getto, deputy director of scheduling and advance at Interior ... Lauren Maddox, principal at the Podesta Group ... Sharon Wagener, LD for Rep. Brownley (h/t Samantha Greene) ... Christine Trippi ... Brian Hart, founder and CEO of LightHouse DC (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Reese Dickens ... Kerry Troup ... Politico's Jordan Hosko ... Rebecca Kirschner Katz, partner at Hilltop Public Solutions ... Suzanne Elio ... Mike Mears, RNC's director of strategic partnerships ...

... **Fred Brown**, a senior counselor at Dezenhall Resources and an RJC and RNC alum (h/t Rebecca Schieber) ... Ryan Hampton -- his latest piece in HuffPost:

<http://bit.ly/2hIUOTb> ... Karin Tanabe ... Scott Tiel ... Elise Aronson ... Jamie Reno ... Andrew Light ... Deion Sanders ... Isaac Levido ... Mike Whatley ... Catherine Tran ... Iowa GOP operative Eric Woolson ... Rhonda Bentz ... David Sours ... NYT alum Carla Baranauckas ... former Rep. John Sweeney (R-N.Y.) is 62 ... former Rep. Charles Djou (R-Hawaii) is 47 ... Richard Weiblinger ... Marianna Boyd ... Brendan McDermott ... William Smith ... Ike Crews ... Kate Leone ... Ann E.W. Stone ... Chris Sautter ... Alen Salerian ... Virginia Pancoe ... Marcel Lettre ... Connie Doebele ... Ryan Hampton is 37 ... Jeff Berman is 46 ... Paul Bradley ... Mark Craft ... Tiffany Newton-Kenslow ... Robin Pressman ... Paul Vornholt ... Ann Selzer (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :**

The high prices that drug makers set for prescription drugs can put financial strain on patients, employers, unions and others who provide health care coverage to more than 50 percent of Americans. Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers, unions and government programs. But, as list prices - the starting point for those negotiations -- continue their nearly double-digit increases, the effects ripple throughout the system. The key to ensuring greater access and affordability lies in fostering greater competition. Facilitating faster reviews of generics and biosimilars, identifying off-patent drugs with little or no generic competition, and ending anti-competitive practices that keep safe, effective alternatives out of the market are also key to abating rising drug costs for patients. Learn more at

affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sun 6/25/2017 3:13:06 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Starbucks: TRUMP declines to blame Obama on FOX -- BILL COHAN on how GARY COHN 'fell for' Trump -- KOCH network plans to spend 300-400M in '18 -- SPOTTED at MNUCHIN's wedding -- FIELDS/WEINSTEIN nuptials pool report

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Starbucks
06/25/2017 11:10 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Sunday morning. THE PRESIDENT left the White House at 9:16 a.m. "in golf clothes (white shirt, white cap, dark slacks)," per pooler Alexis Simendinger. "Agents are dressed in their khakis and plaid, baggy, short-sleeved shirts--attire accessorized with ball caps. One was just practicing a pantomimed golf swing in the driveway." ... Trump pulled into Trump National Golf Club in Virginia at 9:51 a.m.

STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP (@realDonaldTrump) at 8 a.m.: "Hillary Clinton colluded with the Democratic Party in order to beat Crazy Bernie Sanders. Is she allowed to so collude? Unfair to Bernie!"

-- **NOTE:** Hillary Clinton became the Democratic Party's nominee 334 days ago. Trump beat her 229 days ago.

MICHAEL KRUSE in POLITICO Magazine, "I Found Trump's Diary -- Hiding in Plain Sight: Legally risky, undiplomatic and sometimes wrong, Trump's Twitter feed is a document for the ages. And historians don't want to lose it": "In the presumed absence, then, of a more traditional version of the form, Trump's collected tweets comprise the closest thing to a diary this presidency will produce.

"And that is what makes the messages from @realDonaldTrump, almost 800 and counting since January 20, 2017, such a prize to those who care the most about lasting insight into the president and this administration. If @realDonaldTrump was to go dark, and Trump stopped tweeting to his more than 32 million followers, humans and bots alike, the loss from a historical standpoint would be acute." <http://politi.co/2t9dyzX>

TRUMP ON "FOX AND FRIENDS" SUNDAY MORNING -- PETE HEGSETH: "Who's been your biggest opponent? Has it been Democrats resisting? Has it been fake news media? Has it been deep state leaks? What's -- when you think about it, what holds it up the most? --" ... **TRUMP:** ... "One of the things that should be solved, but it probably won't be, is that the Republicans and Democrats don't get together. And I'm open arms; but, I don't see that happening. They fight each other. The level of hostility. In other words, this isn't just Trump, this has been like this for years. You've been doing this for a long time, it's been like that for a long time. But the level of hostility - as an example, the healthcare bill that you are reporting on and that everybody's reporting on."

-- TRUMP WAS TEED UP, BUT DECLINES TO BLAME OBAMA: HEGSETH: "How frustrating is it to have former President Obama there, out there leading the resistance?" **TRUMP:** "Well I think -- I don't think he's leading it. He actually just put out a small statement. I don't see that leading it. But other people are leading."

-- TRUMP HITS WARREN ... AGAIN: HEGSETH: "How do you overcome that when someone like Senator Warren - Elizabeth Warren literally says 'People are going to die because of President Trump's health-care bill?'" **TRUMP:** "Well I actually think she's a hopeless case. I call her Pocahontas, and that's an insult to Pocahontas. I actually think that she is just somebody that's got a lot of hatred, a lot of anger."

WHAT TO WATCH FOR THIS WEEK -- "Will Anthony Kennedy step down from the Supreme Court?" by AP's Mark Sherman: "The Supreme Court enters its final week of work before a long summer hiatus with action expected on the Trump administration's travel ban and a decision due in a separation of church and state case that arises from a Missouri church playground. The biggest news of all, though, would be if Justice Anthony Kennedy were to use the court's last public session on Monday to announce his retirement.

"To be sure, Kennedy has given no public sign that he will retire this year and give President Donald Trump his second high court pick in the first months of his administration. Kennedy's departure would allow conservatives to take firm control of the court. But Kennedy turns 81 next month and has been on the court for nearly 30 years. Several of his former law clerks have said they think he is contemplating stepping down in the next year or so. Kennedy and his clerks were gathering over the weekend for a reunion that was pushed up a year and helped spark talk he might be leaving the court." <http://bit.ly/2t5rBWQ>

-- KELLYANNE CONWAY on ABC'S "THIS WEEK": CONWAY: "I will never reveal a conversation between a sitting justice and the president or the White House, but we're paying very close attention to these last bit of decisions. And I can tell you one thing, just as the president did with Justice Neil Gorsuch, whenever there are vacancies, whenever that happens, he will look for somebody who has fidelity to the constitution, who doesn't make up the law as they go along, and somebody who has the judicial temperament and a record that's beyond reproach, as did Justice Gorsuch.

"We just hope the next time we can get more than a handful of Democratic senators to vote for our nominee to the Supreme Court and to the federal courts. We'd like a lot more cooperation from our Democratic friends. We know obstruction and resistance is their motto. It's not working. And it's not working for the American people, Supreme Court nominations and otherwise."

THE BIG PICTURE -- "The weakest defense in Washington? Saying 'I don't recall'," by Darren Samuelsohn: "Some of President Donald Trump's closest confidants seem to be suffering from an affliction common in high-stakes White House investigations: memory loss. In his recent testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee concerning his role in the unfolding Russia saga, Attorney General Jeff Sessions answered questions with some variation of 'I do not recall' more than 20 times. Amnesia is often a favorite response from witnesses in criminal and congressional investigations, and it's often the most truthful reply-but people caught up in scandals can wind up facing perjury or other charges if prosecutors can later show they were intentionally trying to dodge tough questions." <http://politi.co/2t5ihSQ>

HOW TIMES CHANGE -- "Freedom Caucus holds fire on Senate Obamacare repeal bill," by Kyle Cheney and Rachael Bade: "The most hardline conservatives in the House are taking an unusually cautious approach to the Senate's Obamacare replacement, promising to keep an open mind about whatever their colleagues across the Capitol send back. It's a change in strategy for the House Freedom Caucus. When House leaders first released a health care bill in February, for instance, group members took to television talk shows to pan the plan as 'Obamacare lite,' furious that it didn't, in their eyes, do enough to unravel the 2010 health care law.

"They also threatened to withhold their support until changes were made, and later won concessions. For now, those hardball tactics have disappeared. As the Senate looks to pass its own health care legislation this week, those same House conservatives are taking a more measured approach -- even as several conservatives in the Senate are currently balking at the bill." <http://politi.co/2u2UDDF>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** One in eight Americans struggles to get enough to eat. Inspired by the commitment from our partners (employees), Starbucks is working with Feeding America to channel our unsold fresh food to feed the communities we serve. By 2020, as our FoodShare program grows, we'll donate 50 million meals each year: <http://sbux.co/2sBiWeM> *****

BUT, BUT, BUT ... "Senate health-care bill faces serious resistance from GOP moderates," by WaPo's Juliet Eilperin and Amy Goldstein: "A small group of moderate Republican senators, worried that their leaders' health-care bill could damage the nation's social safety net, may pose at least as significant an obstacle to the measure's passage as their colleagues on the right. The vast changes the legislation would make to Medicaid, the country's broadest source of public health insurance, would represent the largest single step the government has ever taken toward conservatives' long-held goal of reining in federal spending on health-care entitlement programs in favor of a free-

market system.

"That dramatic shift and the bill's bold redistribution of wealth - the billions of dollars taken from coverage for the poor would help fund tax cuts for the wealthy - is creating substantial anxiety for several Republican moderates whose states have especially benefited from the expansion of Medicaid that the Affordable Care Act has allowed since 2014." <http://wapo.st/2sPOf36>

-- **WHO TO WATCH:** Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.).

-- **THE PROBLEM:** Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is going to have to cajole and lean on moderate and conservative senators to find enough votes. While he may be able to tweak the bill on the margins to bring some of the lawmakers on board -- and lawmakers will be able to add amendments to the underlying bill text -- it's unclear if he'll be able to thread the needle for passage next week. As we wrote earlier this week, McConnell is going to put this bill up for a vote no matter what -- he wants lawmakers on the record.

KOCH WATCH -- "Koch network ramps up political spending while trying to push Trump team," by Kevin Robillard in Colorado Springs, Colorado: "The leadership of the Koch brothers' network is brushing off its occasionally chilly attitude toward President Donald Trump, trying to nudge the administration in its direction as the group's annual summit began Saturday just after Charles Koch met with Vice President Mike Pence. The network of conservative donors announced Saturday it plans to spend between \$300 million and \$400 million on politics and policy during the 2018 cycle. ...

"The millions from the Koch network and its wealthy allies will boost the Trump administration on some key priorities, especially tax reform and rolling back regulations. It also will help push back against others - especially Attorney General Jeff Sessions' desire to implement tough-on-crime policies - and working to make Obamacare repeal efforts more conservative. And they could prove critical to Republican efforts to retain the House and expand a majority in the Senate." <http://politi.co/2t9li4k>

-- **"Koch chief says health care bill insufficiently conservative,"** by AP's Steve Peoples: "Tim Phillips, who leads Americans For Prosperity, the Koch network's political arm, called the Senate's plans for Medicaid 'a slight nip and tuck' of President Barack Obama's health care law, a modest change he described as 'immoral.' 'This Senate bill needs to get better,' Phillips said. 'It has to get better.'" <http://apne.ws/2sFaGts>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Trump allies push White House to consider regime change in Tehran," by Michael Crowley: "As the White House formulates its official policy on Iran, senior officials and key Trump allies are calling for the new administration to take steps to topple Tehran's militant clerical government. Supporters of dislodging Iran's iron-fisted clerical leadership say it's the only way to halt Tehran's dangerous behavior, from its pursuit of nuclear weapons to its sponsorship of terrorism.

"Critics say that political meddling in Iran, where memories of a 1953 CIA-backed coup remain vivid, risks a popular backlash that would only empower hardliners. That's why President Barack Obama assured Iranians, in a 2013 speech at the United Nations, that 'we are not seeking regime change.' But influential Iran hawks want to change that under Trump. 'The policy of the United States should be regime change in Iran,' said Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), who speaks regularly with White House officials about foreign policy. 'I don't see how anyone can say America can be safe as long as you have in power a theocratic despotism,' he added." <http://politi.co/2tINGIF>

-- "Trump's Team Faces Reality in the Middle East," by the Times of Israel's Herb Keiron: "Washington is adopting a much different approach to peacemaking than the previous administration, a sign that it has learned from US President Barack Obama's mistakes. And the mother of all Obama's mistakes on the Israeli-Palestinian issue came when -- just a few months after being sworn into office -- he made a very clear demand for Israel to stop all settlement activity, everywhere ... The Trump administration is taking a different approach. It is making no public demands ... And, all the while, it is probing the sides to see what they are - and are not - willing to give, and then trying to see if there are ways to bridge the gaps. And it is doing this all very much behind closed doors, without megaphone diplomacy, without public threats of laying down an American blueprint, or dangling promises of high-profile summits." <http://bit.ly/2u398Y5>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "U.S. top court set to rule on religious rights; travel ban looms," by Reuters' Lawrence Hurley: "The U.S. Supreme Court is set to rule on Monday in a closely watched religious rights case involving limits on public funding for churches and other religious entities as the justices issue the final rulings of their current term. The nine justices are due to rule in six cases, not including their decision expected in the coming days on whether to take up President Donald Trump's bid to revive his ban on travelers from six predominantly Muslim countries in which an emergency appeal is pending. Of the remaining cases argued during the court's current term, which began in October, the most eagerly awaited one concerns a Missouri church backed by a conservative Christian legal group. The ruling potentially could narrow the separation of church and state." <http://reut.rs/2s9V9yl>

THE JUICE

-- SPOTTED AT STEVEN MNUCHIN and LOUISE LINTON's WEDDING last night at the Mellon Auditorium: President Donald Trump (in black tie) and First Lady Melania Trump, Vice President Mike Pence (who officiated) and Karen Pence, Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, Reince Priebus and Sally Priebus, DHS Secretary John Kelly, CIA director Mike Pompeo, Interior Secretary Mike Zinke, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, HUD Secretary Ben Carson and Candy Carson, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, White House Counsel Don McGahn and Shannon McGahn, deputy national security advisor Dina Powell and David McCormick ...

... **Sean and Rebecca Spicer**, Kellyanne Conway, Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau, John Paulson, Jim Donovan, Steve Roth, Eddie Lampert, Woody Johnson, Lee Eisenberg, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Tom Barrack, Eli and Jenna Miller, Stephen Miller, House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy, C. Boyden Gray, Brad and Candice Parscale, Tommy Hicks, Reed Cordish, Rudy Giuliani, Richard and Karen LeFrak and Harrison LeFrak, Bill Paxon and Susan Molinari, Mike Shields and Katie Walsh, Ken Duberstein, Anthony Scaramucci. Seafood was served during cocktail hour, along with filet for dinner and a big white wedding cake. There was lots of beautiful flowers at the wedding, ballerinas performed, bagpipes and then a big band and many people hit the dance floor, according to attendees. **Full report from Darren Samuelsohn, Rebecca Morin and Cristiano Lima** <http://politi.co/2t8w9MZ> ... **25 photos on one page** <http://dailym.ai/2sEI6A>

-- **MNUCHIN** was spotted with three agents at DCA early this morning -- he was dropping off one of his kids at the airport.

-- **WE REPORTED YESTERDAY THAT REP. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT (D-N.Y.)** filed a financial disclosure form that listed a checking account with between \$5 million and \$25 million. His office said he filed the report in error, and the account has between \$1,000 and \$15,000. The new report has not yet showed up on the clerk's website.

SUNDAY BEST -- GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS speaks to **SENATE MINORITY LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER (D-N.Y.)** on **ABC'S "THIS WEEK"** --

STEPHANOPOULOS: "Are they going to pass this bill?" **SCHUMER:** "I think it's 50-50. First, Democrats, we are doing everything we can to fight this bill because it's so devastating for the middle class. I think they have, at best, a 50-50 chance of passing this bill. To get three senators to vote no, probably -- you can say yes, you can say no, probably 50-50."

-- **BRIT HUME** talks with **HHS SECRETARY TOM PRICE** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY"** --

PRICE: "What we're trying to do here, admittedly, is to thread a needle to make it so that, as the president says, every single American needs to be able to have access to the kind of coverage that they want," Price said, adding that conversations with Republican holdouts are ongoing. "That's the nature of the legislative process and that's what we'll be working through this week." **More from Patrick Temple-West, whose birthday is today** <http://politi.co/2t5LvB6>

-- **DANA BASH** speaks with **OHIO GOV. JOHN KASICH** on **CNN'S "STATE OF THE UNION"** -- **BASH -- HE'S OPPOSED TO THE SENATE GOP HEALTH CARE BILL:**

"OK. So, given the problems that you just laid out, do you think that Senator Portman of Ohio should vote no?" **KASICH:** "Well, I -- I don't think the bill's adequate now. And unless it gets fixed, I would -- look, I'm against it. And I'm not against it just because I want to be against it. There's some things in these bill -- in these bills, in these -- in these provisions that are an improvement. My job, as I see my job as a governor of the state, not as a Republican governor, but the governor of this state, my job is to look not

just today, but in the out years, at the impact it's going to have on people who have -- who need help.

"Dana, I was at a restaurant on Friday . And I was at a Wendy's, actually. And I was -- there was a partition. And I looked over at the people that had gathered there. And there were about, I don't know, 25 kids. All of them were here in Columbus for Special Olympics. And I looked at them and I thought, are these people being served? Are they going to be served by this bill in the future? My conclusion right now is no."

-- **CHUCK TODD** speaks to **SEN. RON JOHNSON (R-WISC.)** on **NBC'S "MEET THE PRESS": JOHNSON -- ON HEALTH CARE:** "[W]hat I'd like to do is slow the process down, get the information, go through the problem-solving process, actually reduce these premiums that have been artificially driven up because of Obamacare mandates. So let's actually fix the problem. But in the end, I come from manufacturing base. I will look at whatever I'm forced to vote on, and I'll ask myself, 'Is this better tomorrow than where we are today? Is it continuous improvement?' And that's what will guide my decision."

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump depart the White House on June 24 to attend Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and Louise Linton's wedding. | Ron Sachs/Pool/Getty

DEEP DIVE -- WILLIAM D. COHAN in August's Vanity Fair, "The Untold Story of How Gary Cohn Fell for Donald Trump": "While [Lloyd] Blankfein was recuperating, Cohn seemed to delight in the attention and adulation he received when he filled in for his boss on earnings calls, industry presentations, and media events, such as The New York Times's DealBook Conference. That's when, some say, he became overconfident and decided to inquire of several of his fellow board members about becoming C.E.O., even as Blankfein was responding well to his chemotherapy treatments. 'Gary made a play to replace Lloyd,' according to a former Goldman partner. It didn't work. The board was 'noncommittal' to Cohn, he continues. 'There's a lot of loyalty to Lloyd on the board.'

...

"The timing was perfect for Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, to pounce. He approached Cohn, supposedly at the suggestion of mutual friends. 'Jared Kushner has always been a little starstruck with Goldman Sachs people,' says a former Goldman partner who knows him well. 'He's always liked that sort of promotional edginess that Goldman Sachs has had, and he's always liked the reputation that Goldman Sachs has the best people, quote unquote, the smartest, savviest people. The idea, by the way, that Jared was suddenly in a position where he actually had the power to call on and hire and lure a number of people like that to the bench side, if you will, was a very, very intoxicating, enticing, and really kind of exciting thing to him,' the former partner

continues. 'This was an incredibly sort of convenient and opportune kind of thing that came along for Gary because-whether he was going to Washington or not-Gary was out.'" <http://bit.ly/2u3jTd1>

MATT VISER in the Boston Globe, "Jared Kushner got his start as Somerville landlord": "At 19, he was in the training-wheels stage of his career as a developer, learning as he went, making his share of mistakes, acquiring a landlord's tough edge and cool calculus -- traits he still manifests in the White House. Learning to fix up and flip clusters of low-end apartment buildings, he used Somerville as his own private laboratory. And he passed the first key test -- he made a profit. Of course, he had a headstart. Much as Trump began his career of deals with a multimillion-dollar boost from his father, Kushner started out with his wealthy father acting as senior partner and offering crucial assistance -- including helping secure \$9 million in mortgage loans....

"And his efforts paid off -- the properties he bought for \$8.3 million sold four years later for \$13 million. But Kushner, who did not respond to requests for an interview to discuss his business record in Somerville, also made a number of rookie errors and left numerous angry tenants in his wake. His properties amassed 25 housing complaints over four years, including complaints about overflowing dumpsters, pests, and sewage odors, according to the Globe review. Tenants complained of what they called nonsensical financial dealings. Some renters say they went an entire winter without heat." <http://bit.ly/2t5dGju>

WHAT ERIC HOLDER IS READING -- "Analysis indicates partisan gerrymandering has benefited GOP," by AP's David Lieb: "The 2016 presidential contest was awash with charges that the fix was in: Republican Donald Trump repeatedly claimed that the election was rigged against him, while Democrats have accused the Russians of stacking the odds in Trump's favor. Less attention was paid to manipulation that occurred not during the presidential race, but before it - in the drawing of lines for hundreds of U.S. and state legislative seats. The result, according to an Associated Press analysis: Republicans had a real advantage.

"The AP scrutinized the outcomes of all 435 U.S. House races and about 4,700 state House and Assembly seats up for election last year using a new statistical method of calculating partisan advantage. It's designed to detect cases in which one party may have won, widened or retained its grip on power through political gerrymandering. The analysis found four times as many states with Republican-skewed state House or Assembly districts than Democratic ones. Among the two dozen most populated states that determine the vast majority of Congress, there were nearly three times as many with Republican-tilted U.S. House districts." <http://apne.ws/2s5voE7>

BUSINESS BURST -- "Facebook Is Going Hollywood, Seeking Scripted TV Programming," by WSJ's Joe Flint and Deepa Seetharaman: "Facebook to Hollywood: Let's do lunch. Social networking giant Facebook Inc. is moving its ambitions in TV-quality video to the front burner, taking meetings and making deals with an eye toward launching a slate of original programming by the end of summer, people familiar with the

matter said. In meetings with major talent agencies including Creative Artists Agency, United Talent Agency, William Morris Endeavor and International Creative Management Partners, Facebook has indicated it is willing to commit to production budgets as high as \$3 million per episode, people familiar with the situation say."

<http://on.wsj.com/2rQ6Omz>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** One in eight Americans struggles to get enough to eat. Inspired by the commitment from our partners (employees), Starbucks is working with Feeding America to channel our unsold fresh food to feed the communities we serve. By 2020, as our FoodShare program grows, we'll donate 50 million meals each year: <http://sbux.co/2sBiWeM> *****

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- POLITICO Magazine's "America's 11 Most Interesting Mayors": Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles ... **Hillary Schieve**, Reno, Nev. ... **Kevin Faulconer**, San Diego ... **Greg Fischer**, Louisville, Ky. ... **Marty Walsh**, Boston ... **Michael Hancock**, Denver ... **Jennifer Roberts**, Charlotte, N.C. ... **Tomás Regalado**, Miami, Florida ... **Jackie Biskupski**, Salt Lake City, Utah ... **Bill Peduto**, Pittsburgh ... **Dan Gilbert**, the shadow mayor of Detroit. <http://politi.co/2sEZm0w>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman, filing from Palm Beach, Florida:

-- **"My Father's Fashion Tips,"** by **Tom Junod** in GQ: "In 1996, in a piece that was nominated for a National Magazine Award, Tom Junod wrote not only of his dad's impeccable style but also of the secrets -- and underwear rules -- of a lost generation." <http://bit.ly/2szLZP8>

-- **"Deepest Dive Ever Under Antarctica Reveals a Shockingly Vibrant World,"** by Laurent Ballesta in July's NatGeo: "Our special report offers a rare look at life beneath the frozen continent -- where penguins, seals, and exotic creatures thrive." ***With 15 pix on one page*** <http://on.natgeo.com/2s2rV9e> (h/t Blake Hounshell)

-- **"Crimson Tidings:** The primordial color gets its due," by Elizabeth Powers in the Weekly Standard: <http://twos.io/2rLD4qR> (h/t ALDaily.com)

-- **"The Wages of War Without Strategy,"** by Robert Cassidy and Jacqueline Tame on the Strategy Bridge: "In its wars since 11 September 2001, the United States has arguably cultivated the best-equipped, most capable, and fully seasoned combat forces in remembered history. They attack, kill, capture, and win battles with great nimbleness and strength. But absent strategy, these victories are fleeting. Divorced from political objectives, successful tactics are without meaning." <http://bit.ly/2szMg4p>

-- **"This Is How Big Oil Will Die,"** by Seth Miller in NewCo: "It's 2025, and 800,000 tons of used high strength steel is coming up for auction. The steel made up the Keystone XL pipeline ... [which at] its peak ... carried over 500,000 barrels a day for processing at refineries in Texas and Louisiana. But in 2025, no one wants the oil."

<http://bit.ly/2szZhLp>

-- **"Supertasters Among the Dreaming Spires,"** by Dan Rosenheck in 1843 Magazine: "Every Oxford taster is a scientist in one form or another, ranging from endearingly geeky to absurdly so ... Cambridge [tasters] were methodical, precise and pragmatic - much like Cambridge. Whereas Oxford had people who grew up with wine. They'd just taste and say: Oh, that's obviously Bordeaux." <http://bit.ly/2rLo5NI>

-- **"Camille Paglia: On Trump, Democrats, Transgenderism, and Islamist Terror,"** by The Weekly Standard's Jonathan V. Last: "Today's liberalism has become grotesquely mechanistic and authoritarian: It's all about reducing individuals to a group identity, defining that group in permanent victim terms, and denying others their democratic right to challenge that group and its ideology. Political correctness represents the fossilised institutionalisation of once-vital revolutionary ideas, which have become mere rote formulas." <http://twos.io/2szPMfe> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

-- **"Confessions of a Cartel Hit Man,"** by Martin Corona in Men's Journal: <http://mjmag.ag/2tDcVvH>

-- **"Can We Blame the Mafia on Lemons?"** by Cara Giaimo in Atlas Obscura: "Lemon trees need well-fertilised soil, steady water, and protection from wind and extreme temperature, which come at great cost. Trees need to be coddled for seven or eight years before they produce enough lemons to sell. When they do bear fruit, it's easy enough for people to steal it." <http://bit.ly/2t0xjJl>

-- **"The 2017 Jefferson Lecture -- Powerlessness and the Politics of Blame" --** Martha C. Nussbaum at the Kennedy Center on May 1: "The Greeks and Romans saw a lot of anger around them. But they did not embrace or valorise anger. They did not define manliness in terms of anger, and tended to impute it to women, whom they saw as lacking rationality. However much they felt and expressed anger, they waged a cultural struggle against it, seeing it as destructive of human well-being and democratic institutions." <http://bit.ly/2tDB5X4>

-- **"About Tomorrow,"** by Bruce Wexler in E-Flux: "Human beings differ from other animals with regard to ... post-natal neuroplasticity in two important ways. First, our brains are more immature at birth and susceptible to environmental shaping to a greater degree and for a longer time. Second, humans are the only animals that shape and reshape the environments that shapes their brain. This powerful combination is the basis of cultural evolution, and of most features of human minds, behavior and communities." <http://bit.ly/2sL8uPw>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Former Vice President Joe Biden on Saturday, with a small Secret Service

detail, on the Acela out of New York. He got off in Wilmington, rocking a pair of sunglasses, one earbud in and carrying a briefcase -- "looking as relaxed and cool as ever," per our tipster.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Susan Glasser and Peter Baker hosted a farewell party last night at their house for Indira Lakshmanan and Dermot Tatlow, who are moving to St. Petersburg, Florida, next week as Indira takes up her post as Craig Newmark Chair in Journalism Ethics at The Poynter Institute for Media.

SPOTTED: German Amb. Peter Wittig and Huberta von Voss-Wittig, Afghan Amb. Hamdullah Mohib and Lael Mohib, Judy Woodruff and Al Hunt, Marty Baron, Andrea Mitchell, Nihal Krishan, Nancy Cook and Christopher Rowland, former Pakistani Amb. Husain Haqqani and Farahnaz Ispahani, Mike Oreskes and Geraldine Baum, former U.S. Ambs. Melanne and Phil Verveer, former U.S. Amb. Steve Sestanovich, Katharine Weymouth, Mark Landler, Julie Davis, David Sanger, Margaret Carlson, Juliet Eilperin, Laura Meckler, Ben Chang, Christina Sevilla and Steve Rochlin, Justin Kenny, Heidi Crebo-Rediker and Doug Rediker, Dana Thomas, Amanda Downes, David Rennie, Jonas Parellø-Plesner, Bay Fang, Steve Heuser, Mary Louise Kelly, Manuel Roig-Franzia and Ceci Connolly, Nicole Raben, Denise Couture.

-- **SPOTTED** at a surprise birthday party last night for Ziad Ojakli at Kellari Taverna on K Street: Sumya Ojakli, Angela Flood, Alison Jones, Mercy and Matt Schlapp, David and Gretchen Hobbs, Bruce Andrews, Pam Thiessen, Nick Calio and Eric Ueland.

-- **SPOTTED** on the rooftop of The Brixton for a mini-reunion of alumni of the Obama administration NSC: Terry Szuplat, Eric Pelofsky, Dan Schneiderman, Jon Wolfsthal, Yael Lempert, Michael Sessums, Ben Chang, Salman Ahmed, Evan Medeiros, Bernadette Meehan, Meg Doherty, Stacey May, Andrew Scott, Matt Kaczmarek, Brian Nilsson.

SPOTTED at Ron and Sara Bonjean's annual "Good Pants Ranch Summer Party" yesterday in Purcellville, Va. (a camel made an appearance): Paul Kane, Jo Maney, John Scofield, Dana Bash, Anne Brady, Matt Dornic and Kyle Volpe, Doug Heye, Emily Miller, Fran Decker, Jared Allen and Jackie Kucinich, Kenny Day, Rebecca Haller, Sheldon and Shannon Bream, Matt Wolking, Tom Williams, David and Jenny Drucker, Chris Bond, Dan Ronayne, Tracey and Nick Lintott, Jim Richards and Brian Walsh.

--The RNC held their summer meeting this weekend at the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Chicago, Illinois. **SPOTTED:** Vice President Mike and Mrs. Karen Pence, Speaker Paul Ryan, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas), RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel, RNC co-chairman Bob Paduchik, RNC chief of staff Sara Armstrong, Arkansas state chairman Doyle Webb, Ohio state chairwoman Jane Timken, Hunter Wallace and Suhail Khan.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- **MICHELLE FIELDS** married **JAMIE WEINSTEIN** in a ceremony yesterday at the Breakers in Palm Beach. Dinner and dancing was held in the

Mediterranean Ballroom overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Fields is a Breitbart and HuffPo alum who now runs JMW Strategies with Weinstein, a commentator and host of "The Jamie Weinstein Show" podcast. They met as reporters at the Daily Caller. They served crab cakes, lobster tail medallions, sliced beef tenderloin, and citrus panko crusted sea bass along with huge ice-cream sundaes (there were also two tomato bars in a pre-dinner reception because Jamie is a big fan of tomatoes). Partiers hoisted Fields and Weinstein in the air during the hora. Colorful performers dancing on stilts also were a hit. The couple is flying out to Europe today on their honeymoon: they'll visit Italy and Morocco and take a river cruise from Budapest to Munich.

SPOTTED: Juleanna Glover hitting the dance floor early with Christopher Reiter, Benny Johnson shaking hands with Oliver Darcy (who had written critical pieces on IJR), bridesmaids Lauren Hagen, Betsy Woodruff, and Kathryn Lyons, Will Rahn, Taylor Lorenz, Ben Jacobs, Olivia Nuzzi, Asawin Suebsaeng and Liz Brown, Jonathan Swan, Vince and Alison Coglianese, Tim Lim, Josiah Ryan, Matt Lewis and Erin DeLullo, Katelyn Rieley Johnson, Alex and Nancy Pappas, Jonathan and Anna Beth Strong, Mike Dunkle, Mitchell Sutherland, Guy Benson, Amber Smith.

--**PICS** <http://bit.ly/2rQjf1M> ... <http://bit.ly/2t9fjx9> ... <http://bit.ly/2sPQu6O> ... <http://bit.ly/2sEZpt2> ... **First kiss** <http://bit.ly/2u3cWJ2> ... **First dance** <http://bit.ly/2u3enHq> ... **The decadent cake** <http://bit.ly/2sPMqU3>

-- Politico reporter (and author of Morning Energy) **Anthony Adragna** married longtime girlfriend **Meghan Cassidy** in a ceremony at the historic St. Francis Hall in Northeast D.C. on Saturday evening. Cassidy is a teacher at Gonzaga High School who just graduated from a master's program at Georgetown. The couple met in summer 2013, hit it off after being set up on a blind date by mutual friends and have been together ever since. Pool report: "The couple exchanged vows outdoors, surrounded by the lush greenery of the historic Renaissance-style hall, built in 1931. The lively reception featured everything from the Isley Brother's Shout to Taylor Swift's Shake It Off and had guests young and old on the dance floor all night long." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2t8YfHp> ... <http://bit.ly/2t9PIId0>

SPOTTED: Heather Caygle and Aaron Lorenzo, Brian Fung and Ryan Kellett, Mikaela Lefrak, Dean Scott and Rachel Leven

--**"Kristin Donnelly, Rick Bosh"** -- N.Y. Times: "The bride, 36, is a White House producer in Washington for NBC News. She graduated from Syracuse. ... The groom, 36 and known as Rick, is a producer for 'Andrea Mitchell Reports' on MSNBC. He graduated from Southern Methodist University. ... The couple met in March 2010 when they worked as producers for day programming at MSNBC." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2u2PMIS>

--**"Pia Carusone, Leanne Pittsford"**: "Ms. Carusone, 37, is a political consultant and a senior adviser to Americans for Responsible Solutions, a Washington-based gun violence prevention organization, founded by Gabrielle Gifford and Mark Kelly. Ms.

Carusone was until June 2012 the chief of staff to Ms. Giffords, then an Arizona congresswoman. Ms. Carusone is also a founder of Republic Restoratives Distillery, which is also in Washington and makes vodka, bourbon and rye whiskey. She graduated from Bard College and is now a governor of the school's alumni association. ... Ms. Pittsford, 36, is the chief executive of Start Somewhere, a company in Washington that operates Lesbians Who Tech and two other programs aiming to increase diversity in the technology sector. She graduated from California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo, and received a master's degree in education with a concentration on equity and social justice from San Francisco State University." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2t8yfvQ>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Kirsten Hughes, chair of the MassGOP (hat tip: Natalie Boyse)

BIRTHDAYS: WSJ and POLITICO alum Patrick O'Connor, now with CGCN Group, is 41 ... CNN's Betsy Klein ... Josh Lahey, principal of the Podesta Group, who once hiked all 2,100 miles of the Appalachian Trail starting in Georgia and ending in Maine ... Justice Sonia Sotomayor is 63 ... civil rights activist James Meredith is 84 ... Anthony Bourdain is 61 ... Jeremy Bearer-Friend, Sen. Elizabeth Warren's tax policy maven, moving to NYC this fall to teach tax law at NYU (h/t Alex Levy) ... tech guru Laurent Crenshaw, YELP's director of public policy, is 37 --he celebrated Friday evening at a pop-up party inside of the National Union Building on 9th and F st NW with some of Capitol Hill's finest (h/t Stewart Verdery) ... Politico's Patrick Temple-West ... N.Y. Post's Reuven Fenton ... Rep. Leonard Lance (R-NJ) is 65 ... Dan Meyers, VP at DCI Group ... John Randall, VP of digital at CRAFT ... Robert Harvey ... Jackie Bradford, pres and GM of NBC4 in DC ... Danielle Doheny is 3-0 ... CBS and Reuters alum Corbett Daly, bro of Uncles Matthew and Brendan ... AP alum John Heilprin, now senior journalist and editor for the int'l service of the Swiss Broadcasting Corp. ... Ambassador Melanne Vermeer ... Tita Freeman ... Alan McQuinn ... former Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick (D-Mich.) is 72 ...

... **Scott Zumwalt**, senior director at Bully Pulpit Interactive, is 33 ... Alan McQuinn, ITIF's research analyst (h/t Samantha Greene) ... John Randolph Thornton, author of the novel "Beautiful Country," is 26 ... John Meyer ... Dan Spinelli ... Eric Litmer ... Taylor Haulsee ... Alberto "Beto" Cardenas of Vinson & Elkins ... Abbie Sorrendino of Senate Rules ... Gretchen Yelmini ... Bryan Bernys ... IAVA alum John Alexander Nicholson ... Mike Gehrke ... Jon Carson ... Summer Oesch ... Jason Stephany ... Martha Vukelich-Austin ... Marc Caplan ... Mora Segal ... Heidi Johnson (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... James Michael Thornberry ... Hank Greenwald, famed for his long run as the SF Giants baseball play-by-play man ... Ted Pease is 62 ... Carly Simon is 72 ... Phyllis George is 68 ... Ricky Gervais is 56 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Starbucks:** One in eight Americans struggles to get enough to eat. Inspired by the commitment from our partners (employees), Starbucks is working with Feeding America to channel our unsold fresh food to feed the communities we serve. By 2020, as our FoodShare program grows, we'll donate 50 million meals each year: <http://sbux.co/2sBiWeM> *****

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To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Morris, Madeline[morris.madeline@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Thur 7/20/2017 10:27:17 PM
Subject: RE: EPA Evening News Highlights 7.20.17
EPA Evening News Clips 7.20.17.docx

I've updated the document with two additional stories and pasted them below.

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2017 5:47 PM
To: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; McMurray, Forrest <mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov>; Morris, Madeline <morris.madeline@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA Evening News Highlights 7.20.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 7.20.17

The Washington Examiner: Low blow? Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse tries to get EPA Chief Scott Pruitt disbarred

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt don't get along. Since Pruitt's confirmation hearing, Whitehouse has been relentless. He's demanded records, filed complaints, and accused Pruitt of being in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt don't get along. Since Pruitt's confirmation hearing, Whitehouse has been relentless. He's demanded records, filed complaints, and accused Pruitt of being in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry.

NTK Network: Dem Senator Files Bogus Complaint Against EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) is partnering with a liberal 501(c)(3) group to file a bogus complaint against Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt. The complaint, which was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, alleges that Pruitt was not

forthcoming during his Senate confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The complaint aims to get Pruitt disbarred. The claim that Pruitt was not forthcoming is outrageous considering Pruitt answered 1,200 questions during the hearing and in written testimony, which are the most questions ever answered by an EPA nominee

Wall Street Journal: Trump Shows Progress In Push To Rein In Federal Rule-Making

The Trump administration has cut the number of regulatory actions in process across the federal government by nearly 20%, a new report will show on Thursday... Among the planned actions is a move to “streamline” the approval process for apprenticeship and vocational training programs at the Labor Department, a proposal from the Interior Department to cut permitting paperwork for hunters and fishermen, and a proposal to drop Obama-era regulation of oil and gas development on certain Native American reservations by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Associated Press: EPA Promoting Millions In Funding For Water Programs

The Environmental Protection Agency is considering a dozen proposed water and sewer projects for a program that uses \$25 million in federal funds to help secure billions in additional public and private financing. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt highlighted the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loans on Wednesday as an example of President Donald Trump’s commitment to infrastructure projects. The program was created by Congress in 2014.

(NOTE: wire story also ran in Baltimore Sun, CBS 13 Baltimore, T. Louis Post-Dispatch, San Diego Union Tribune, KPBS San Diego, Fox 5 San Diego, San Francisco Chronicle, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Raleigh News & Observer, San Antonio Express-News and KHNL NBC and KGMB CBS Hawaii)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: US EPA Sues Cleveland Heights, Accusing City Of Fouling Doan, Dugway Brooks With Untreated Stormwater

The U.S. EPA and Justice Department filed a federal lawsuit today against Cleveland Heights, accusing the city of Clean Water Act violations due to sewer overflows into the Doan and Dugway brooks. At the same time, Cleveland Heights signed a consent decree that requires the city to take immediate steps to upgrade its sewer system to prevent raw sewage from flowing into the Lake Erie tributaries. The lawsuit gives the EPA jurisdiction over the city while the problems are being addressed, a spokeswoman for the EPA said.

Bloomberg BNA: California A Big Winner Of New EPA Water Loans

The agency announced July 19 which water systems it would invite to apply for its new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, or WIFIA, loans. Though 43 systems expressed interest in the program, which subsidizes a project's borrowing costs, the agency had enough funding to select only 12. The selected projects, which range from a new sanitary tunnel in St. Louis to a water treatment plant in Oak Ridge, Tenn., will now be eligible to apply for more than \$2.3 billion in low-cost loans, which can be paired with other sources of funding to complete the projects. The selected infrastructure projects will “improve water quality for 20 million Americans,” Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement.

The Billings Gazette: Coal exports exceeded expectations at start of year

U.S. coal exports rose sharply in early 2017 amid increased demand in Asia and Europe. The U.S. Department of Energy said Tuesday that exports are up by 8 million tons to 22.3 million tons through March. That’s a 58 percent jump over the 14.1 million tons exported during the same period in 2016. The increase comes after five years of declines

Michigan Live: EPA asks for input on Kalamazoo River cleanup

The Environmental Protection Agency is looking for public input on plans to clean up a nearly two-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River. The EPA will hold a public meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 25, at the Otsego Public Library, 401 Dix Street, where EPA officials will present details of the plan and accept written and oral comments. The public is also invited to comment on the proposed work during a two-month comment period from July 1 to Aug. 30. Written comments may be submitted at the meeting in Otsego or online.

Bloomberg BNA: Small Businesses Praise Effort To Stop EPA’s Solvent Rules

Small companies in America’s heartland welcomed a House committee’s effort to block the EPA from restricting the use of three solvents and possibly forcing them to close their doors. “We might go out of business if the EPA proceeded with the rules as written,” Dallas Cochran, who owns a small company called Charles Paint Research, Inc. in Kansas City, Mo., told Bloomberg BNA. The House Appropriations Committee approved a funding bill and report for the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies July 18 with provisions directing the regulator to delay its final rules that would restrict some uses of three solvents: trichloroethylene (TCE), methylene chloride, and n-methylpyrrolidone (NMP).

Politico: White House Trumpets Early Success In Wiping Out Regulations

The White House on Thursday released its first official scorecard on the administration's

progress in taking a wrecking ball to former President Barack Obama's regulatory legacy, saying it has shelved or postponed hundreds of pending rules with many more on the chopping block. "By amending and eliminating regulations that are ineffective, duplicative, and obsolete, the Administration can promote economic growth and innovation and protect individual liberty," the White House Office of Management and Budget said as it posted the rundown Thursday morning. It called its steps so far "the beginning of fundamental regulatory reform and a reorientation toward reducing unnecessary regulatory burden on the American people."

National Evening News Highlights 7/20/17

The Washington Post: Attorney General Jeff Sessions Says He Plans To Stay In Role, Despite Trump's Comments About Him

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Thursday that he plans to stay in his job despite the president's public assertion that he would not have nominated Sessions to the post had he known that he would recuse himself from the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. At a news conference ostensibly meant to announce the takedown of an illicit online marketplace, Sessions said he had the "honor of serving as attorney general," and he planned "to continue to do so as long as that is appropriate." Asked how he could keep working, having apparently lost President Trump's confidence, Sessions responded: "We're serving right now. The work we're doing today is the kind of work that we intend to continue. "I'm totally confident that we can continue to run this office in an effective way," Sessions added.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/low-blow-sen-sheldon-whitehouse-tries-to-get-epa-chief-scott-pruitt-disbarred/article/2629269>

Low blow? Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse tries to get EPA Chief Scott Pruitt disbarred

By Philip Wegmann, 7/20/17 4:07 PM

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt don't get along.

Since Pruitt's confirmation hearing, Whitehouse has been relentless. He's demanded records, filed complaints, and accused Pruitt of being in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry.

But Whitehouse's push to get Pruitt disbarred seems like a cheap shot.

In a complaint to the Oklahoma Bar Association, Whitehouse argues that Pruitt's "misleading answers, evasiveness, and stonewalling" should disqualify him from practicing law in his home state. In particular, Whitehouse complains that Pruitt wasn't forthcoming about his use of several email accounts during his time as Oklahoma attorney general.

Whether or not Whitehouse's charge has merit, trying to get Pruitt disbarred seems too cute by half. The senator is the wrong person, the bar association is the wrong place, and now is the wrong time.

Letting Whitehouse go after Pruitt is like letting a radical environmentalist fox in the regulatory henhouse. He's one of the most outspoken climate activists in Congress and he coincidentally takes campaign cash from the environmental lobby hand over fist, including donations from green mega-donor Tom Steyer.

But if Whitehouse's motivations are a bit suspect, so are those of Oklahoma Bar Association. Litigating the integrity of the EPA administrator won't be possible there because that organization's president, Garvin Isaacs, reached a decision even before Pruitt's confirmation.

"It's the worst thing in the history of our environment!" the supposedly non-partisan Isaacs told the New Yorker. "We are in danger. The whole country is in danger. Our kids are in danger. People have got to do something about the Citizens United decision that is turning our country into an oligarchy, run by oil-and-gas interests."

A fair trial in that partisan environment hardly seems possible for Pruitt.

Most galling, though, is Whitehouse's insistence to go off the Hill to take a personal swipe at the EPA administrator. Disbarring Pruitt wouldn't keep him from doing his job. It'd just humiliate him and generate a new talking point.

If Democrats really find Pruitt objectionable, they should find a champion without clear conflicts of interest like Whitehouse, limit their attacks to the congressional sphere, or kick him out of office by winning in 2020.

Anything else seems petty.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/dem-senator-files-bogus-complaint-against-epa-administrator-scott-pruitt/>

Dem Senator Files Bogus Complaint Against EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

By NTK Network Staff 7/20/17

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) is partnering with a liberal 501(c)(3) group to file a bogus complaint against Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt.

The complaint, which was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, alleges that Pruitt was not forthcoming during his Senate confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The complaint aims to get Pruitt disbarred.

The claim that Pruitt was not forthcoming is outrageous considering Pruitt answered 1,200 questions during the hearing and in written testimony, which are the most questions ever answered by an EPA nominee.

If that was not enough transparency for Whitehouse, Pruitt also released all of his emails to the

committee and clarified any confusion about his email accounts.

The Center for Biological Diversity is classified as a 501(c)(3), meaning that does not have to publicly disclose its donors. However, the group's website is littered with anti-Republican language.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-shows-progress-in-push-to-rein-in-federal-rule-making-1500512400>

Trump Shows Progress In Push To Rein In Federal Rule-Making

By Ted Mann, 7/19/17

The Trump administration has cut the number of regulatory actions in process across the federal government by nearly 20%, a new report will show on Thursday.

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, which analyzes the costs and effects of federal rules for the White House budget office, is slated to report a total of 1,732 regulatory actions, such as agency rule-makings, will be completed within the next year, according to a briefing on the report. That figure is a drop from 2,095 in the final update from the Obama administration last fall.

The assessment is one of the earliest official measures of the president's goal to rein in federal rule-making.

In addition, the administration will announce it has fully withdrawn 469 regulatory proposals and postponed action on an additional 391, to allow further evaluation by agencies. And federal agencies have proposed 58 regulations deemed to have an economic impact of \$100 million or more, a 50% decrease from the final year of the Obama administration.

The figures are the first sign of a “truly fundamental shift” in the government’s approach to regulation, said Neomi Rao, the new OIRA chief, in an interview Wednesday.

At a White House meeting with business leaders in January, President Donald Trump predicted that he would cut regulations by 75%. “We’re going to be cutting regulation massively,” he said, while also being “protective of the people.”

The president in January also signed an executive order requiring that two regulations be eliminated for every new one created.

Mr. Trump has said rolling back regulations will spur economic growth and reduce business and industry costs. Environmentalists and some Democrats have argued that an overly aggressive program could threaten public health and consumers.

On Thursday, the administration will outline in greater detail how it plans to deliver on its goals. Some of the 1,700 planned actions will include new rules proposed by various agencies, Ms. Rao said, but they will also include proposals to scrap some existing regulations that the administration believes are unnecessary or overly burdensome.

Among the planned actions is a move to “streamline” the approval process for apprenticeship and vocational training programs at the Labor Department, a proposal from the Interior Department to cut permitting paperwork for hunters and fishermen, and a proposal to drop Obama-era regulation of oil and gas development on certain Native American reservations by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Thursday’s filing will be an update on the Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions. The full agenda, along with the administration’s regulatory plan, is due to be released this fall.

Over time, Ms. Rao said, these policies will help combat what she called the “inertia behind the

regulatory state.”

The Associated Press

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/epa-promoting-millions-in-funding-for-water-programs/2017/07/19/c1a33ea4-6ca8-11e7-abbc-a53480672286_story.html?utm_term=.70368dd0cb96

EPA Promoting Millions In Funding For Water Programs

By The Associated Press, 7/19/17

The Environmental Protection Agency is considering a dozen proposed water and sewer projects for a program that uses \$25 million in federal funds to help secure billions in additional public and private financing.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt highlighted the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loans on Wednesday as an example of President Donald Trump’s commitment to infrastructure projects. The program was created by Congress in 2014.

The 12 projects invited to apply are a mix of local and regional initiatives in nine states. They include projects to reduce the environmental impact of wastewater discharged into the ocean near Miami, a new sewage tunnel in St. Louis and rehabilitating aging public water infrastructure in Baltimore.

EPA did not provide any time frame for when the winning projects will be selected.

Cleveland Plain-Dealer

http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2017/07/us_epa_sues_cleveland_heights.html

US EPA Sues Cleveland Heights, Accusing City Of Fouling Doan, Dugway Brooks With Untreated Stormwater

By James F. McCarty, 7/19/17

The U.S. EPA and Justice Department filed a federal lawsuit today against Cleveland Heights, accusing the city of Clean Water Act violations due to sewer overflows into the Doan and Dugway brooks.

At the same time, Cleveland Heights signed a consent decree that requires the city to take immediate steps to upgrade its sewer system to prevent raw sewage from flowing into the Lake Erie tributaries.

The lawsuit gives the EPA jurisdiction over the city while the problems are being addressed, a spokeswoman for the EPA said.

"Keeping raw sewage out of U.S. waters and communities is a priority for the EPA because overflows can present a significant threat to human health and the environment," said Chris Korleski, the EPA's Region 5 Water Division Director, in a prepared statement. "Today's settlement will protect water quality and prevent the spread of disease-causing bacteria and viruses."

The agreement requires the city to initiate cleanups where needed, to perform inspections, and to enact enhanced monitoring and computer modeling as part of a comprehensive study to assess the sewer system's overall capacity.

The city estimates phase one of the work will cost about \$12 million over the next four years, and have a significant impact on sewer rates, increasing the average customer's bill about \$18.73 per month.

City Manager Tanisha Briley said the city has been involved in negotiations with the EPA for

two years, and is committed to resolving the sewer overflow problem. She said the city believes the rate increases will provide good returns on investment.

"We're only looking at the most cost-effective and impactful remedies," Briley said.

Cleveland Heights has already completed repair projects where overflows are frequent: on Fairmount Boulevard, between Wellington and Idlewood roads, and on Randolph Avenue. The work was designed to address overflows and to help reduce basement flooding.

However, the federal lawsuit accuses the city of continuing to discharge raw sewage into the creeks and Lake Erie. Sewer overflows are prohibited under the Clean Water Act.

The city, in response, denied any liabilities related to the discharges, according to the lawsuit.

Cleveland Heights operates a municipal sewer system that collects stormwater and transports it to the brooks, which flow into Lake Erie.

The municipal sewer system is separate and distinct from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's sewage pipe system, which transports sewage and stormwater to the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant. That system also was the subject of a Clean Water Act lawsuit filed by the U.S. EPA, which is being addressed by Project Clean Lake, the sewer district's \$3 billion 25-year master plan to greatly reduce sewage overflows with a network of tunnels, two dewatering pump stations and renovated sewage treatment plants.

A sewer district spokeswoman said the project will greatly improve water quality and reduce bacteria discharges, but "we know there will still be water quality issues from a variety of other sources."

"Infrastructure management for aging sewer systems require significant investment and regular maintenance to ensure local waterways are protected," Jennifer Elting said. "Cleveland Heights'

agreement with the federal government recognizes that fact, and the city will take necessary steps to mitigate pollution."

Elting said the sewer district's Heights-Hilltop Sewer System Evaluation Study will help Cleveland Heights develop its plan, and the district's Community Infrastructure Program will provide a portion of the funds needed for the city's sewer repairs.

Cleveland Heights' partial consent decree is an initial step that does not fully resolve the problem, the U.S. EPA said. The city must first develop a master plan to reduce the sewage overflows. A second consent decree will govern the timing and implementation of the plan.

The city must complete an evaluation survey of the sewer system by Dec. 4. Follow-up surveys must be completed by Nov. 1, 2019, Feb. 3, 2020, and June 30, 2021.

Bloomberg BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/1245/split_display.adp?fedfid=117057185&vname=dennotallissues&fn=117057185

California A Big Winner Of New EPA Water Loans

By: David Schultz, 7/20/17

California will take home half the available funds after the EPA announced the 12 water projects that are eligible to receive low-cost infrastructure loans.

The agency announced July 19 which water systems it would invite to apply for its new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, or WIFIA, loans. Though 43 systems expressed interest in the program, which subsidizes a project's borrowing costs, the agency had enough funding to select only 12.

The selected projects, which range from a new sanitary tunnel in St. Louis to a water treatment plant in Oak Ridge, Tenn., will now be eligible to apply for more than \$2.3 billion in low-cost loans, which can be paired with other sources of funding to complete the projects.

The selected infrastructure projects will “improve water quality for 20 million Americans,” Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement.

Golden State

California's water systems applied for more WIFIA loans than systems in any other state and were rewarded with four winning projects in San Francisco, San Diego, Orange County, and Morro Bay. Of the \$2.3 billion in loans, more than half will go to these four projects.

In addition to submitting more applications than other states, California engaged in a strong lobbying blitz at the EPA and in Congress on the issue. For example, the Orange County Water District convinced four of its members of Congress—Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D) and Reps. Ed Royce (R), Lou Correa (D), and Dana Rohrabacher (R)—to write letters to the EPA on its behalf.

Denis Bilodeau, president of the water system's board of directors, said Orange County wasn't trying to improperly influence the process but simply to make sure its application got noticed at the EPA.

“These are engineering projects,” he told Bloomberg BNA. “There's really little you can effectuate. The numbers don't lie.”

Water Recycling

Orange County is asking the EPA for a \$124 million loan to expand the facility where it sanitizes wastewater and then injects it back into the county's aquifers.

Bilodeau said Orange County and other water systems in California have been at the forefront of

this water recycling technique, partly out of necessity. The state's worsening droughts and growing population have forced it to get creative to reduce its reliance on the Colorado River and other sources of surface water.

He said that, without a WIFIA loan, the cost of borrowing on the private market might have been too expensive.

“It may make the project not viable if we would have to borrow at market rate,” he said. “We're trying to become self sufficient, but we won't make water at any cost.”

Next Steps

The 12 water systems selected by the EPA now need to work with the agency over the course of the next year on developing a term sheet for their respective loans.

As in Orange County, Morro Bay, a town of 10,000 people north of Los Angeles, also applied for an EPA loan to expand its water recycling capabilities. Rob Livick, the city's director of public works, told Bloomberg BNA its existing treatment facility was built in the 1950s and that his community has been struggling to find funding to upgrade it for the past 10 years.

Livick said Morro Bay and other Golden State cities and towns jumped at the chance to compete for this new source of federal infrastructure project and that the EPA made it easy for them to apply.

“It was fairly painless,” he said. “From the city's standpoint, thus far it was a pleasure to work with EPA.”

The Billings Gazette

<http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/coal-exports-exceeded-expectations->

Coal Exports Exceeded Expectations At Start Of Year

By Heather Richards, 7/18/17

U.S. coal exports rose sharply in early 2017 amid increased demand in Asia and Europe.

The U.S. Department of Energy said Tuesday that exports are up by 8 million tons to 22.3 million tons through March.

That's a 58 percent jump over the 14.1 million tons exported during the same period in 2016. The increase comes after five years of declines.

Exporting Wyoming coal has long been an idea on the backburner for state leaders eager to find more places to sell the Powder River Basin rock. But the economics simply haven't lined up. Only Cloud Peak Energy, the Gillette-based company with mines in northern Wyoming and across the border in Montana, has plans to export to Asia this year. The company has 3.3 million tons of exports under contract for the year. It sent 0.5 million tons across seas in the first three months of the year.

Other companies operating in Wyoming have shown interest in developments like the Millennium Bulk export terminal in Longview, Washington, which if completed would open up another conduit to send U.S. coal to Asia. The terminal was first proposed in 2012 and has experienced repeated delays in permitting and pushback from environmental opponents. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is set to release a final environmental review of the project later this year.

Export volumes in the first quarter of the year were up most significantly through ports in Norfolk, Virginia, and New Orleans. Top destinations for U.S. coal were the Netherlands, South Korea and India.

Despite the increase, volumes remain well below industry expectations when plans were announced over the past decade to build or expand coal ports in Oregon, Louisiana, Washington state and California.

Most of those projects have stalled or been canceled. Federal officials say there's still more

export capacity than needed.

EPA asks for input on Kalamazoo River cleanup

The Environmental Protection Agency is looking for public input on plans to clean up a nearly two-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River.

The EPA will hold a public meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 25, at the Otsego Public Library, 401 Dix Street, where EPA officials will present details of the plan and accept written and oral comments.

The public is also invited to comment on the proposed work during a two-month comment period from July 1 to Aug. 30. Written comments may be submitted at the meeting in Otsego or online.

The EPA may modify the plan or select another solution based on new information or gathered from public comments, according to a document describing the proposed cleanup in the 1.9-mile stretch between the former Plainwell Dam and the city of Otsego Dam.

The EPA released a document with eight options for the cleanup process, ranging from taking no action, to aggressive area-wide excavation.

The EPA is recommending Alternative A-5, which includes capping, bank excavation, floodplain soil excavation, channel realignment, Gun River excavation, targeted excavation on Knife Blade Island, institutional controls, and long-term monitoring.

"This alternative has less impact to habitat and surrounding properties than other options, protects against erosion and would help maintain flow in the river channel. It is less costly than alternatives A-6, A-7 and A-8, protects human health and the environment, and provides short- and long-term effectiveness while complying with applicable or relevant and appropriate

requirements..." the EDA said about the project.

MLive

[Http://Www.Mlive.Com/News/Kalamazoo/Index.Ssf/2017/07/Epa_Wants_Input_On_Continuing.Html](http://www.Mlive.Com/News/Kalamazoo/Index.Ssf/2017/07/Epa_Wants_Input_On_Continuing.Html)

Us Epa Asks For Input On Kalamazoo River Cleanup

By Brad Deverreaux, 7/20/17

OTSEGO, MI -- The Environmental Protection Agency is looking for public input on plans to clean up a nearly two-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River.

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The EPA, with input from Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the community, will make the final decision on what cleanup alternative will be implemented.

Public comments are important and could encourage EPA to modify or change its preliminary cleanup decision, according to the agency. The EPA plans to review input and compile responses to be published in a document.

In August 1990, the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site was listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Priorities List.

From Kalamazoo to Lake Michigan, 80 miles of the Kalamazoo River including sediments, riverbanks and floodplains have been contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, which are organic chemicals previously used in paper manufacturing.

The EPA finished removing concentrations of PCBs from the river at the Plainwell Dam in December 2010, and from Portage Creek in November 2013.

In August 2016, the EPA began the next stages of removing PCB-contaminated soil from M-89, east to the Otsego Township Dam, and restoring the riverbanks.

The portion of the project that the EPA is currently asking for citizen input on, called Area 2, extends east from the Otsego Township Dam, nearly two miles to the former Plainwell Dam.

So far, the EPA has removed nearly 450,000 cubic yards of contaminated material and cleaned up and restored nearly 7 miles of the river and its banks, according to information released about the Area 2 cleanup.

The EPA says a cleanup is needed because the agency determined PCB contamination might pose unacceptable hazards and risks to people who may eat fish caught from the Kalamazoo River. Fish advisories are currently in place to warn residents and anglers about the risks associated with eating fish from the river.

Additionally, potential exposure to high levels of PCBs, dioxin and furans in soil may pose unacceptable risks to residents and those who partake in recreational activities along the river, the EPA said, however, the risks are lower than those for people who eat fish from the river.

Bloomberg BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/lpages/lpages.adp?pg=breaking_news&bn_product=deln#urn:bna:0000015d5d30d72

Small Businesses Praise Effort To Stop EPA's Solvent Rules

By Pat Rizzuto, 7/20/17

Small companies in America's heartland welcomed a House committee's effort to block the EPA from restricting the use of three solvents and possibly forcing them to close their doors.

"We might go out of business if the EPA proceeded with the rules as written," Dallas Cochran, who owns a small company called Charles Paint Research, Inc. in Kansas City, Mo., told Bloomberg BNA.

The House Appropriations Committee approved a funding bill and report for the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies July 18 with provisions directing the regulator to delay its final rules that would restrict some uses of three solvents: trichloroethylene (TCE), methylene chloride, and n-methylpyrrolidone (NMP).

The three solvent rules would be the first to manage chemical risks that the EPA would issue under the 2016 Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act, which amended the Toxic Substances Control Act. The EPA proposed the rules to reduce potential neurological and reproductive health problems that its analysis concluded could result for workers and consumers exposed to the solvents.

Environmental and public health advocates are among those who oppose the delays, saying public confidence in the new chemicals law would be undermined if solvent manufacturers and the House committee succeed in blocking the rules.

A local government agency director in Washington state and the attorney for a coalition of environmental and labor groups said communities, first responders, and workers need the protections these chemical rules would provide.

“We strongly support banning these substances as a needed protection for our residents and our environment. Local governments are first responders for nearly every negative outcome resulting from the widespread use of hazardous chemicals like methylene chloride and TCE—we have a deep stake in this issue,” Lynda Ransley, who directs the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, Washington, said by email.

Chemical Use Restrictions

Using methylene chloride and NMP to remove paint and coatings would generally be prohibited by the EPA’s first rule. The second would prohibit TCE for aerosol degreasing and spot cleaning by dry cleaners, while the third would prevent that solvent’s use in vapor degreasers, which can be used to clean metal, electronic equipment, and other materials.

The EPA should continue its planned evaluation of the health and environmental risks that many

different uses of all three solvents pose before deciding whether to proceed with its three rules, the committee's report said. The EPA's rules were based on narrow risk assessments it conducted before TSCA was amended. Since the law was overhauled, the EPA announced that it would assess a wider range of uses for the three solvents.

Methylene chloride-containing strippers are safe to use if people follow the directions on the label to use them outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces, said Charles Paint Research's Cochran.

Walter Tornstrom, who owns a small company called Rapid Blanket Restorer Corp. in Chesterland, Ohio, told Bloomberg BNA that the House committee approach, which would require the EPA to do more analysis before rulemaking, is better. His company sells a methylene-chloride solvent formulation used in the printing industry.

Both companies employ fewer than five people. The future of their businesses is also a concern for Cochran, who is 62 years old, and Tornstrom, 75. The EPA's rule to restrict the use of one of the solvents could make it difficult for them to sell their business because methylene chloride-containing products are important for both companies, Cochran and Tornstrom told Bloomberg BNA.

Workers, Local Budgets

King County's Ransley told Bloomberg BNA that paramedic services, medical examiners, household hazardous waste collection sites, and solid waste disposal are just a few of the local government services that must deal with the consequences of methylene chloride, TCE, and other hazardous materials in the community, she said.

The county also has to pay hazardous waste disposal fees to safely manage solvent-containing waste that residents bring to local collection sites, she told the EPA in comments on the proposed rule. If residents were to throw products into their municipal trash can, they will likely land in public landfill, where they would pollute local air, soil, and water, she wrote in comments on the paint stripping and TCE degreasing rules.

Attorney Robert Sussman, who represents Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, a national coalition of environmental, labor, and other advocacy groups, also opposes the delay.

“Workers using paint removers will die” if the EPA delays issuing its proposed methylene chloride and NMP restriction rule, he said at a meeting organized by the advocacy organization BlueGreen Alliance Foundation, which represents both workers and environmental groups.

Federal and state health agencies know of 17 deaths involving bathtub refinishers using methylene-chloride containing products.

Amended TSCA

Daniel Rosenberg, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, told Bloomberg BNA that the action of the House Appropriations Committee conflicts with the Lautenberg Act, which authorized the EPA proceed with the rulemakings.

“Given the House language is contrary to the language and intent of Congress in Lautenberg, it would make sense for the Senate to right the wrong of the House by including a statement that reflects what the law said,” he said.

Rosenberg said he’s talked to Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), who introduced the Lautenberg Act and is ranking member of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over the EPA’s budget. Udall is “well-positioned to insist that something as egregious as the House report isn’t allowed to influence what EPA does,” Rosenberg said.

Udall’s office did not reply to requests for comment July 19.

Richard Denison, lead senior scientist with the Environmental Defense Fund, told Bloomberg BNA the agency doesn’t need to start over again with the rules.

“EPA’s existing assessments demonstrated that these chemicals pose huge health risks, and we believe EPA has a responsibility to promptly address these risks by finalizing their proposed bans,” he said.

Politico

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/19/white-house-wiping-out-regulations-240742>

White House trumpets early success in wiping out regulations

By Andrew Restuccia, 7/19/17

The White House on Thursday released its first official scorecard on the administration's progress in taking a wrecking ball to former President Barack Obama's regulatory legacy, saying it has shelved or postponed hundreds of pending rules with many more on the chopping block.

"By amending and eliminating regulations that are ineffective, duplicative, and obsolete, the Administration can promote economic growth and innovation and protect individual liberty," the White House Office of Management and Budget said as it posted the rundown Thursday morning. It called its steps so far "the beginning of fundamental regulatory reform and a reorientation toward reducing unnecessary regulatory burden on the American people."

The anti-regulation push is perhaps the greatest success so far of Donald Trump's presidency — a contrast to the resistance he's faced on repealing Obamacare, restricting immigration, rewriting the tax code or building a border wall.

Trump's agencies have withdrawn or postponed hundreds of regulatory actions that the Obama administration had in the works late in 2016, OMB said in a preview provided to POLITICO late Wednesday.

OMB also boasted that the new administration has proposed astronomically fewer rules than Obama did during his early days in office. And it estimated that Trump's regulatory actions through last month will reduce economic burdens by \$22 million a year — in contrast with more than \$3 billion in annual burdens that Obama's agencies had imposed as of the same point in 2009.

The White House hadn't yet released its full data, making those estimates impossible to check. But Trump has made it clear that erasing regulations is one of the prime missions he has set for his administration. With Trump's legislative agenda stalled, administration officials are increasingly looking

toward deregulation as an issue they can sell to his base ahead of the midterm elections.

"Government is using muscles it hasn't used in a really long time, exposing and removing redundant and unnecessary regulation," OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said in a statement.

Liberals have been increasingly dismayed by Trump's anti-regulation push, however.

"He's done tremendous damage," Rena Steinzor, a University of Maryland law professor who has tracked regulations for decades, told POLITICO in May. "I've been watching through six presidents, and all that pales in comparison to this."

The product that OMB was scheduled to release Thursday is the Trump administration's first update of the "Unified Agenda," a twice-a-year compilation of planned or expected regulatory actions across the executive branch.

The agenda normally attracts little attention from the media or the public, but Trump has scrambled the recipe by adding "deregulatory actions" to its name and mission. A more complete version of the Unified Agenda will be released in the fall, when agencies may have a better handle on how to carry out Trump's policies — including a mandate that they repeal two regulations for every new one they propose.

The Obama White House's final Unified Agenda included more than 3,300 regulatory actions, including 193 it deemed "economically significant."

In contrast, OMB said the Trump administration has shelved about 860 regulatory actions, either

withdrawing them or moving them from "active status." Those include 469 regulatory actions that agencies have withdrawn altogether.

It said Trump's agencies have also proposed just 58 "economically significant" regulations, down about half from Obama's last year in office. The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs defines an economically significant regulation as a rule that could have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

Agencies have also taken at least 16 "deregulatory actions," according to OMB. Those include late Obama-era regulations that Trump wiped out with a stroke of a pen after Congress voted to block them during his first few months as president.

While the White House's latest numbers are new, Trump has made little secret of his anti-regulation crusade. His best-known targets have included Obama administration regulations limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, requiring restaurants to list calories on their menus and barring some mentally ill people from buying guns.

But OMB says much more in the works. For example, it said, the Department of Transportation is preparing to offer passenger railroads "greater flexibility" in meeting crashworthiness standards, while the Labor Department will streamline approvals for apprenticeship programs and the EPA will abandon "a costly and premature plan to regulate oil and gas development" on certain Indian reservations.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/attorney-general-jeff-sessions-says-he-plans-to-stay-in-role-despite-trumps-comments-about-him/2017/07/20/527e53d4-6d51-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html?utm_term=.698359a53e84

Attorney General Jeff Sessions says he plans to stay in role, despite Trump's comments about him

By Matt Zapposky and Sari Horwitz, 7/20/17

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Thursday that he plans to stay in his job despite the president's public assertion that he would not have nominated Sessions to the post had he known that he would recuse himself from the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

At a news conference ostensibly meant to announce the takedown of an illicit online marketplace, Sessions said he had the "honor of serving as attorney general," and he planned "to continue to do so as long as that is appropriate." Asked how he could keep working, having apparently lost President Trump's confidence, Sessions responded: "We're serving right now. The work we're doing today is the kind of work that we intend to continue.

"I'm totally confident that we can continue to run this office in an effective way," Sessions added.

On Wednesday, the New York Times published an article about an interview with Trump in which the president said he would not have appointed Sessions attorney general had he known Sessions would recuse himself from the investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

"Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself he should have told me before he took the job, and I would have picked somebody else," Trump said, according to the New York Times.

Sessions's recusal came after The Washington Post reported that he had met with Russia's ambassador to the United States and had not disclosed the contacts when the matter came up at his congressional confirmation hearing. In the New York Times interview, Trump also criticized his attorney general for his responses to questions in that hearing, saying: "Jeff Sessions gave some bad answers. He gave some answers that were simple questions and should have been simple answers, but they weren't."

Trump said Sessions's recusal was personally unfair to him as president.

"How do you take a job and then recuse yourself?" Trump said. "If he would have recused

himself before the job, I would have said, ‘Thanks, Jeff, but I’m not going to take you.’ It’s extremely unfair — and that’s a mild word — to the president.”

Sessions has said he recused himself because of his involvement with the Trump presidential campaign. As a result, Rod J. Rosenstein, whom Trump appointed as deputy attorney general, took charge of the probe, although Rosenstein would later appoint former FBI director Robert S. Mueller III as special counsel to oversee it.

Trump also criticized Rosenstein and Mueller in his New York Times interview, saying both men had conflicts in the Russia probe — Rosenstein because he recommended firing then-FBI Director James B. Comey, which could be part of Mueller’s investigation, and Mueller because he interviewed to replace Comey.

Sessions had been scheduled to hold a news conference on the takedown of the illicit Internet marketplace AlphaBay before the news of Trump’s interview broke, though it was clear from the moment the event started that reporters would not be focused on that. When officials opened the floor to questions, Sessions was asked how seriously he had considered resigning.

“We in this Department of Justice will continue every single day to work hard to serve the national interest, and we wholeheartedly join in the priorities of President Trump,” he responded. He later asserted that his plan to continue in his role.

Rosenstein, too, said he was “proud” to be in the Justice Department, declining to address directly a question about Trump’s criticism about him and Baltimore, where he worked as U.S. attorney. Trump had noted that the city had “very few Republicans.”

Sessions was once thought to be one of Trump’s closest advisers. He was the first senator to endorse Trump at a time when few Republican lawmakers supported the candidate, and early in the president’s administration he seemed to have access to Trump whenever he wanted, an official said.

In public, Sessions wouldn’t shy from linking his department’s priorities with Trump’s. When he

directed federal prosecutors across the country Tuesday to make immigration cases a higher priority, for example, he declared in no uncertain terms, "This is the Trump era."

If Sessions were to resign or be fired, that could call into question the future of the special counsel investigation. According to federal regulations, the special counsel reports to the attorney general, though because Sessions is recused, Mueller reports to Rosenstein. Were Sessions to be replaced at the top, Mueller would be overseen by his successor, who Trump would pick but who would require Senate confirmation. The attorney general can veto the special counsel's decisions but is not supposed to offer day-to-day supervision.

Michael Abboud

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Public Affairs

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EPA Evening News Highlights 7.20.17

The Washington Examiner: Low blow? Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse tries to get EPA Chief Scott Pruitt disbarred

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt don't get along. Since Pruitt's confirmation hearing, Whitehouse has been relentless. He's demanded records, filed complaints, and accused Pruitt of being in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt don't get along. Since Pruitt's confirmation hearing, Whitehouse has been relentless. He's demanded records, filed complaints, and accused Pruitt of being in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry.

NTK Network: Dem Senator Files Bogus Complaint Against EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) is partnering with a liberal 501(c)(3) group to file a bogus complaint against Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt. The complaint, which was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, alleges that Pruitt was not forthcoming during his Senate confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The complaint aims to get Pruitt disbarred. The claim that Pruitt was not forthcoming is outrageous considering Pruitt answered 1,200 questions during the hearing and in written testimony, which are the most questions ever answered by an EPA nominee

Wall Street Journal: Trump Shows Progress In Push To Rein In Federal Rule-Making

The Trump administration has cut the number of regulatory actions in process across the federal government by nearly 20%, a new report will show on Thursday...Among the planned actions is a move to "streamline" the approval process for apprenticeship and vocational training programs at the Labor Department, a proposal from the Interior Department to cut permitting paperwork for hunters and fishermen, and a proposal to drop Obama-era regulation of oil and gas development on certain Native American reservations by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Associated Press: EPA Promoting Millions In Funding For Water Programs

The Environmental Protection Agency is considering a dozen proposed water and sewer projects for a program that uses \$25 million in federal funds to help secure billions in additional public and private financing. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt highlighted the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loans on Wednesday as an example of President Donald Trump's commitment to infrastructure projects. The program was created by Congress in 2014.

(NOTE: wire story also ran in Baltimore Sun, CBS 13 Baltimore, T. Louis Post-Dispatch, San Diego Union Tribune, KPBS San Diego, Fox 5 San Diego, San Francisco Chronicle, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Raleigh News & Observer, San Antonio Express-News and KHNL NBC and KGMB CBS Hawaii)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: US EPA Sues Cleveland Heights, Accusing City Of Fouling Doan, Dugway Brooks With Untreated Stormwater

The U.S. EPA and Justice Department filed a federal lawsuit today against Cleveland Heights, accusing the city of Clean Water Act violations due to sewer overflows into the Doan and Dugway brooks. At the same time, Cleveland Heights signed a consent decree that requires the city to take immediate steps to upgrade its sewer system to prevent raw sewage from flowing into the Lake Erie tributaries. The lawsuit gives the EPA jurisdiction over the city while the problems are being addressed, a spokeswoman for the EPA said.

Bloomberg BNA: California A Big Winner Of New EPA Water Loans

The agency announced July 19 which water systems it would invite to apply for its new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, or WIFIA, loans. Though 43 systems expressed interest in the program, which subsidizes a project's borrowing costs, the agency had enough funding to select only 12. The selected projects, which range from a new sanitary tunnel in St. Louis to a water treatment plant in Oak Ridge, Tenn., will now be eligible to apply for more than \$2.3 billion in low-cost loans, which can be paired with other sources of funding to complete the projects. The selected infrastructure projects will "improve water quality for 20 million Americans," Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement.

The Billings Gazette: Coal exports exceeded expectations at start of year

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Michigan Live: EPA asks for input on Kalamazoo River cleanup

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Politico: White House Trumpets Early Success In Wiping Out Regulations

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National Evening News Highlights 7/20/17

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recuse himself from the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. At a news conference ostensibly meant to announce the takedown of an illicit online marketplace, Sessions said he had the "honor of serving as attorney general," and he planned "to continue to do so as long as that is appropriate." Asked how he could keep working, having apparently lost President Trump's confidence, Sessions responded: "We're serving right now. The work we're doing today is the kind of work that we intend to continue. "I'm totally confident that we can continue to run this office in an effective way," Sessions added.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/low-blow-sen-sheldon-whitehouse-tries-to-get-epa-chief-scott-pruitt-disbarred/article/2629269>

Low blow? Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse tries to get EPA Chief Scott Pruitt disbarred

By Philip Wegmann, 7/20/17 4:07 PM

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt don't get along.

Since Pruitt's confirmation hearing, Whitehouse has been relentless. He's demanded records, filed complaints, and accused Pruitt of being in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry.

But Whitehouse's push to get Pruitt disbarred seems like a cheap shot.

In a complaint to the Oklahoma Bar Association, Whitehouse argues that Pruitt's "misleading answers, evasiveness, and stonewalling" should disqualify him from practicing law in his home state. In particular, Whitehouse complains that Pruitt wasn't forthcoming about his use of several email accounts during his time as Oklahoma attorney general.

Whether or not Whitehouse's charge has merit, trying to get Pruitt disbarred seems too cute by half. The senator is the wrong person, the bar association is the wrong place, and now is the wrong time.

Letting Whitehouse go after Pruitt is like letting a radical environmentalist fox in the regulatory henhouse. He's one of the most outspoken climate activists in Congress and he coincidentally takes campaign cash from the environmental lobby hand over fist, including donations from green mega-donor Tom Steyer.

But if Whitehouse's motivations are a bit suspect, so are those of Oklahoma Bar Association. Litigating the integrity of the EPA administrator won't be possible there because that organization's president, Garvin Isaacs, reached a decision even before Pruitt's confirmation.

"It's the worst thing in the history of our environment!" the supposedly non-partisan Isaacs told the New Yorker. "We are in danger. The whole country is in danger. Our kids are in danger. People have got to do something about the Citizens United decision that is turning our country into an oligarchy, run by oil-and-gas interests."

A fair trial in that partisan environment hardly seems possible for Pruitt.

Most galling, though, is Whitehouse's insistence to go off the Hill to take a personal swipe at the EPA administrator. Disbarring Pruitt wouldn't keep him from doing his job. It'd just humiliate him and generate a new talking point.

If Democrats really find Pruitt objectionable, they should find a champion without clear conflicts of interest like Whitehouse, limit their attacks to the congressional sphere, or kick him out of office by winning in 2020.

Anything else seems petty.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/dem-senator-files-bogus-complaint-against-epa-administrator-scott-pruitt/>

Dem Senator Files Bogus Complaint Against EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

By NTK Network Staff 7/20/17

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) is partnering with a liberal 501(c)(3) group to file a bogus complaint against Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt.

The complaint, which was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, alleges that Pruitt was not forthcoming during his Senate confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The complaint aims to get Pruitt disbarred.

The claim that Pruitt was not forthcoming is outrageous considering Pruitt answered 1,200 questions during the hearing and in written testimony, which are the most questions ever answered by an EPA nominee.

If that was not enough transparency for Whitehouse, Pruitt also released all of his emails to the committee and clarified any confusion about his email accounts.

The Center for Biological Diversity is classified as a 501(c)(3), meaning that does not have to publicly disclose its donors. However, the group's website is littered with anti-Republican language.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-shows-progress-in-push-to-rein-in-federal-rule-making-1500512400>

Trump Shows Progress In Push To Rein In Federal Rule-Making

By Ted Mann, 7/19/17

The Trump administration has cut the number of regulatory actions in process across the federal government by nearly 20%, a new report will show on Thursday.

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, which analyzes the costs and effects of federal rules for the White House budget office, is slated to report a total of 1,732 regulatory actions, such as agency rule-makings, will be completed within the next year, according to a briefing on the report. That figure is a drop from 2,095 in the final update from the Obama administration last fall.

The assessment is one of the earliest official measures of the president's goal to rein in federal rule-making.

In addition, the administration will announce it has fully withdrawn 469 regulatory proposals and

postponed action on an additional 391, to allow further evaluation by agencies. And federal agencies have proposed 58 regulations deemed to have an economic impact of \$100 million or more, a 50% decrease from the final year of the Obama administration.

The figures are the first sign of a “truly fundamental shift” in the government’s approach to regulation, said Neomi Rao, the new OIRA chief, in an interview Wednesday.

At a White House meeting with business leaders in January, President Donald Trump predicted that he would cut regulations by 75%. “We’re going to be cutting regulation massively,” he said, while also being “protective of the people.”

The president in January also signed an executive order requiring that two regulations be eliminated for every new one created.

Mr. Trump has said rolling back regulations will spur economic growth and reduce business and industry costs. Environmentalists and some Democrats have argued that an overly aggressive program could threaten public health and consumers.

On Thursday, the administration will outline in greater detail how it plans to deliver on its goals. Some of the 1,700 planned actions will include new rules proposed by various agencies, Ms. Rao said, but they will also include proposals to scrap some existing regulations that the administration believes are unnecessary or overly burdensome.

Among the planned actions is a move to “streamline” the approval process for apprenticeship and vocational training programs at the Labor Department, a proposal from the Interior Department to cut permitting paperwork for hunters and fishermen, and a proposal to drop Obama-era regulation of oil and gas development on certain Native American reservations by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Thursday’s filing will be an update on the Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions. The full agenda, along with the administration’s regulatory plan, is due to be released this fall.

Over time, Ms. Rao said, these policies will help combat what she called the “inertia behind the regulatory state.”

The Associated Press

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/epa-promoting-millions-in-funding-for-water-programs/2017/07/19/c1a33ea4-6ca8-11e7-abbc-a53480672286_story.html?utm_term=.70368dd0cb96

EPA Promoting Millions In Funding For Water Programs

By The Associated Press, 7/19/17

The Environmental Protection Agency is considering a dozen proposed water and sewer projects for a program that uses \$25 million in federal funds to help secure billions in additional public and private financing.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt highlighted the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loans on Wednesday as an example of President Donald Trump’s commitment to infrastructure projects. The program was created by Congress in 2014.

The 12 projects invited to apply are a mix of local and regional initiatives in nine states. They include projects to reduce the environmental impact of wastewater discharged into the ocean near Miami, a new sewage tunnel in St. Louis and rehabilitating aging public water infrastructure in Baltimore.

EPA did not provide any time frame for when the winning projects will be selected.

Cleveland Plain-Dealer

http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2017/07/us_epa_sues_cleveland_heights.html

US EPA Sues Cleveland Heights, Accusing City Of Fouling Doan, Dugway Brooks With Untreated Stormwater

By James F. McCarty, 7/19/17

The U.S. EPA and Justice Department filed a federal lawsuit today against Cleveland Heights, accusing the city of Clean Water Act violations due to sewer overflows into the Doan and Dugway brooks.

At the same time, Cleveland Heights signed a consent decree that requires the city to take immediate steps to upgrade its sewer system to prevent raw sewage from flowing into the Lake Erie tributaries.

The lawsuit gives the EPA jurisdiction over the city while the problems are being addressed, a spokeswoman for the EPA said.

"Keeping raw sewage out of U.S. waters and communities is a priority for the EPA because overflows can present a significant threat to human health and the environment," said Chris Korleski, the EPA's Region 5 Water Division Director, in a prepared statement. "Today's settlement will protect water quality and prevent the spread of disease-causing bacteria and viruses."

The agreement requires the city to initiate cleanups where needed, to perform inspections, and to enact enhanced monitoring and computer modeling as part of a comprehensive study to assess the sewer system's overall capacity.

The city estimates phase one of the work will cost about \$12 million over the next four years, and have a significant impact on sewer rates, increasing the average customer's bill about \$18.73 per month.

City Manager Tanisha Briley said the city has been involved in negotiations with the EPA for two years, and is committed to resolving the sewer overflow problem. She said the city believes the rate increases will provide good returns on investment.

"We're only looking at the most cost-effective and impactful remedies," Briley said.

Cleveland Heights has already completed repair projects where overflows are frequent: on Fairmount Boulevard, between Wellington and Idlewood roads, and on Randolph Avenue. The work was designed to address overflows and to help reduce basement flooding.

However, the federal lawsuit accuses the city of continuing to discharge raw sewage into the creeks and Lake Erie. Sewer overflows are prohibited under the Clean Water Act.

The city, in response, denied any liabilities related to the discharges, according to the lawsuit.

Cleveland Heights operates a municipal sewer system that collects stormwater and transports it to the brooks, which flow into Lake Erie.

The municipal sewer system is separate and distinct from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's sewage pipe system, which transports sewage and stormwater to the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant. That system also was the subject of a Clean Water Act lawsuit filed by the U.S. EPA, which is being addressed by Project Clean Lake, the sewer district's \$3 billion 25-year master plan to greatly reduce sewage overflows with a network of tunnels, two dewatering pump stations and renovated sewage treatment plants.

A sewer district spokeswoman said the project will greatly improve water quality and reduce bacteria discharges, but "we know there will still be water quality issues from a variety of other sources."

"Infrastructure management for aging sewer systems require significant investment and regular maintenance to ensure local waterways are protected," Jennifer Elting said. "Cleveland Heights' agreement with the federal government recognizes that fact, and the city will take necessary steps to mitigate pollution."

Elting said the sewer district's Heights-Hilltop Sewer System Evaluation Study will help Cleveland Heights develop its plan, and the district's Community Infrastructure Program will provide a portion of the funds needed for the city's sewer repairs.

Cleveland Heights' partial consent decree is an initial step that does not fully resolve the problem, the U.S. EPA said. The city must first develop a master plan to reduce the sewage overflows. A second consent decree will govern the timing and implementation of the plan.

The city must complete an evaluation survey of the sewer system by Dec. 4. Follow-up surveys must be completed by Nov. 1, 2019, Feb. 3, 2020, and June 30, 2021.

Bloomberg BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/1245/split_display.adp?fedfid=117057185&vname=denotallissues&fn=117057185&jd=117057185

California A Big Winner Of New EPA Water Loans

By: David Schultz, 7/20/17

California will take home half the available funds after the EPA announced the 12 water projects that are eligible to receive low-cost infrastructure loans.

The agency announced July 19 which water systems it would invite to apply for its new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, or WIFIA, loans. Though 43 systems expressed interest in the program, which subsidizes a project's borrowing costs, the agency had enough funding to select only 12.

The selected projects, which range from a new sanitary tunnel in St. Louis to a water treatment plant in Oak Ridge, Tenn., will now be eligible to apply for more than \$2.3 billion in low-cost loans, which can be paired with other sources of funding to complete the projects.

The selected infrastructure projects will “improve water quality for 20 million Americans,” Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement.

Golden State

California's water systems applied for more WIFIA loans than systems in any other state and were rewarded with four winning projects in San Francisco, San Diego, Orange County, and Morro Bay. Of the \$2.3 billion in loans, more than half will go to these four projects.

In addition to submitting more applications than other states, California engaged in a strong lobbying blitz at the EPA and in Congress on the issue. For example, the Orange County Water District convinced four of its members of Congress—Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D) and Reps. Ed Royce (R), Lou Correa (D), and Dana Rohrabacher (R)—to write letters to the EPA on its behalf.

Denis Bilodeau, president of the water system's board of directors, said Orange County wasn't trying to improperly influence the process but simply to make sure its application got noticed at the EPA.

“These are engineering projects,” he told Bloomberg BNA. “There's really little you can effectuate. The numbers don't lie.”

Water Recycling

Orange County is asking the EPA for a \$124 million loan to expand the facility where it sanitizes wastewater and then injects it back into the county's aquifers.

Bilodeau said Orange County and other water systems in California have been at the forefront of this water recycling technique, partly out of necessity. The state's worsening droughts and growing population have forced it to get creative to reduce its reliance on the Colorado River and other sources of surface water.

He said that, without a WIFIA loan, the cost of borrowing on the private market might have been too expensive.

“It may make the project not viable if we would have to borrow at market rate,” he said. “We're trying to become self sufficient, but we won't make water at any cost.”

Next Steps

The 12 water systems selected by the EPA now need to work with the agency over the course of the next year on developing a term sheet for their respective loans.

As in Orange County, Morro Bay, a town of 10,000 people north of Los Angeles, also applied for an EPA loan to expand its water recycling capabilities. Rob Livick, the city's director of public works, told Bloomberg BNA its existing treatment facility was built in the 1950s and that his community has been struggling to find funding to upgrade it for the past 10 years.

Livick said Morro Bay and other Golden State cities and towns jumped at the chance to compete for this new source of federal infrastructure project and that the EPA made it easy for them to apply.

“It was fairly painless,” he said. “From the city's standpoint, thus far it was a pleasure to work with EPA.”

The Billings Gazette

http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/coal-exports-exceeded-expectations-at-start-of-year/article_9243143a-dca7-5c70-b35a-3ec66d93e966.html

Coal Exports Exceeded Expectations At Start Of Year

By Heather Richards, 7/18/17

U.S. coal exports rose sharply in early 2017 amid increased demand in Asia and Europe.

The U.S. Department of Energy said Tuesday that exports are up by 8 million tons to 22.3 million tons through March.

That's a 58 percent jump over the 14.1 million tons exported during the same period in 2016. The increase comes after five years of declines.

Exporting Wyoming coal has long been an idea on the backburner for state leaders eager to find more places to sell the Powder River Basin rock. But the economics simply haven't lined up. Only Cloud Peak Energy, the Gillette-based company with mines in northern Wyoming and across the border in Montana, has plans to export to Asia this year. The company has 3.3 million tons of exports under contract for the year. It sent 0.5 million tons across seas in the first three months of the year.

Other companies operating in Wyoming have shown interest in developments like the Millennium Bulk export terminal in Longview, Washington, which if completed would open up another conduit to send U.S. coal to Asia. The terminal was first proposed in 2012 and has experienced repeated delays in permitting and pushback from environmental opponents. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is set to release a final environmental review of the project later this year.

Export volumes in the first quarter of the year were up most significantly through ports in Norfolk, Virginia, and New Orleans. Top destinations for U.S. coal were the Netherlands, South Korea and India. Despite the increase, volumes remain well below industry expectations when plans were announced over the past decade to build or expand coal ports in Oregon, Louisiana, Washington state and California.

Most of those projects have stalled or been canceled. Federal officials say there's still more export capacity than needed.

EPA asks for input on Kalamazoo River cleanup

The Environmental Protection Agency is looking for public input on plans to clean up a nearly two-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River.

The EPA will hold a public meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 25, at the Otsego Public Library, 401 Dix Street, where EPA officials will present details of the plan and accept written and oral comments.

The public is also invited to comment on the proposed work during a two-month comment period from July 1 to Aug. 30. Written comments may be submitted at the meeting in Otsego or online.

The EPA may modify the plan or select another solution based on new information or gathered from public comments, according to a document describing the proposed cleanup in the 1.9-mile stretch between the former Plainwell Dam and the city of Otsego Dam.

The EPA released a document with eight options for the cleanup process, ranging from taking no action, to aggressive area-wide excavation.

The EPA is recommending Alternative A-5, which includes capping, bank excavation, floodplain soil excavation, channel realignment, Gun River excavation, targeted excavation on Knife Blade Island, institutional controls, and long-term monitoring.

"This alternative has less impact to habitat and surrounding properties than other options, protects against erosion and would help maintain flow in the river channel. It is less costly than alternatives A-6, A-7 and A-8, protects human health and the environment, and provides short- and long-term effectiveness while complying with applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements..." the EDA said about the project.

MLive

http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2017/07/Epa_Wants_Input_On_Continuing.Html

Us Epa Asks For Input On Kalamazoo River Cleanup

By Brad Deverreux, 7/20/17

OTSEGO, MI -- The Environmental Protection Agency is looking for public input on plans to clean up a nearly two-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River.

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The EPA, with input from Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the community, will make the final decision on what cleanup alternative will be implemented.

Public comments are important and could encourage EPA to modify or change its preliminary cleanup decision, according to the agency. The EPA plans to review input and compile responses to be published in a document.

In August 1990, the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site was listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Priorities List.

From Kalamazoo to Lake Michigan, 80 miles of the Kalamazoo River including sediments, riverbanks and floodplains have been contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, which are organic chemicals previously used in paper manufacturing.

The EPA finished removing concentrations of PCBs from the river at the Plainwell Dam in December 2010, and from Portage Creek in November 2013.

In August 2016, the EPA began the next stages of removing PCB-contaminated soil from M-89, east to the Otsego Township Dam, and restoring the riverbanks.

The portion of the project that the EPA is currently asking for citizen input on, called Area 2, extends east from the Otsego Township Dam, nearly two miles to the former Plainwell Dam.

So far, the EPA has removed nearly 450,000 cubic yards of contaminated material and cleaned up and restored nearly 7 miles of the river and its banks, according to information released about the Area 2 cleanup.

The EPA says a cleanup is needed because the agency determined PCB contamination might pose unacceptable hazards and risks to people who may eat fish caught from the Kalamazoo River. Fish advisories are currently in place to warn residents and anglers about the risks associated with eating fish from the river.

Additionally, potential exposure to high levels of PCBs, dioxin and furans in soil may pose unacceptable risks to residents and those who partake in recreational activities along the river, the EPA said, however, the risks are lower than those for people who eat fish from the river.

Bloomberg BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/lpages/lpages.adp?pg=breaking_news&bn_product=deln#urn:bna:0000015d5d30d721a1ddff72b6100000

Small Businesses Praise Effort To Stop EPA's Solvent Rules

By Pat Rizzuto, 7/20/17

Small companies in America's heartland welcomed a House committee's effort to block the EPA from restricting the use of three solvents and possibly forcing them to close their doors.

"We might go out of business if the EPA proceeded with the rules as written," Dallas Cochran, who owns a small company called Charles Paint Research, Inc. in Kansas City, Mo., told Bloomberg BNA.

The House Appropriations Committee approved a funding bill and report for the Environmental

Protection Agency and other agencies July 18 with provisions directing the regulator to delay its final rules that would restrict some uses of three solvents: trichloroethylene (TCE), methylene chloride, and n-methylpyrrolidone (NMP).

The three solvent rules would be the first to manage chemical risks that the EPA would issue under the 2016 Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act, which amended the Toxic Substances Control Act. The EPA proposed the rules to reduce potential neurological and reproductive health problems that its analysis concluded could result for workers and consumers exposed to the solvents.

Environmental and public health advocates are among those who oppose the delays, saying public confidence in the new chemicals law would be undermined if solvent manufacturers and the House committee succeed in blocking the rules.

A local government agency director in Washington state and the attorney for a coalition of environmental and labor groups said communities, first responders, and workers need the protections these chemical rules would provide.

"We strongly support banning these substances as a needed protection for our residents and our environment. Local governments are first responders for nearly every negative outcome resulting from the widespread use of hazardous chemicals like methylene chloride and TCE—we have a deep stake in this issue," Lynda Ransley, who directs the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, Washington, said by email.

Chemical Use Restrictions

Using methylene chloride and NMP to remove paint and coatings would generally be prohibited by the EPA's first rule. The second would prohibit TCE for aerosol degreasing and spot cleaning by dry cleaners, while the third would prevent that solvent's use in vapor degreasers, which can be used to clean metal, electronic equipment, and other materials.

The EPA should continue its planned evaluation of the health and environmental risks that many different uses of all three solvents pose before deciding whether to proceed with its three rules, the committee's report said. The EPA's rules were based on narrow risk assessments it conducted before TSCA was amended. Since the law was overhauled, the EPA announced that it would assess a wider range of uses for the three solvents.

Methylene chloride-containing strippers are safe to use if people follow the directions on the label to use them outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces, said Charles Paint Research's Cochran.

Walter Tornstrom, who owns a small company called Rapid Blanket Restorer Corp. in Chesterland, Ohio, told Bloomberg BNA that the House committee approach, which would require the EPA to do more analysis before rulemaking, is better. His company sells a methylene-chloride solvent formulation used in the printing industry.

Both companies employ fewer than five people. The future of their businesses is also a concern for Cochran, who is 62 years old, and Tornstrom, 75. The EPA's rule to restrict the use of one of the solvents could make it difficult for them to sell their business because methylene chloride-containing products are important for both companies, Cochran and Tornstrom told Bloomberg BNA.

Workers, Local Budgets

King County's Ransley told Bloomberg BNA that paramedic services, medical examiners, household hazardous waste collection sites, and solid waste disposal are just a few of the local government services that must deal with the consequences of methylene chloride, TCE, and other hazardous materials in the community, she said.

The county also has to pay hazardous waste disposal fees to safely manage solvent-containing waste that residents bring to local collection sites, she told the EPA in comments on the proposed rule. If residents were to throw products into their municipal trash can, they will likely land in public landfill, where they would pollute local air, soil, and water, she wrote in comments on the paint stripping and TCE degreasing rules.

Attorney Robert Sussman, who represents Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, a national coalition of environmental, labor, and other advocacy groups, also opposes the delay.

"Workers using paint removers will die" if the EPA delays issuing its proposed methylene chloride and NMP restriction rule, he said at a meeting organized by the advocacy organization BlueGreen Alliance Foundation, which represents both workers and environmental groups.

Federal and state health agencies know of 17 deaths involving bathtub refinishers using methylene-chloride containing products.

Amended TSCA

Daniel Rosenberg, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, told Bloomberg BNA that the action of the House Appropriations Committee conflicts with the Lautenberg Act, which authorized the EPA proceed with the rulemakings.

"Given the House language is contrary to the language and intent of Congress in Lautenberg, it would make sense for the Senate to right the wrong of the House by including a statement that reflects what the law said," he said.

Rosenberg said he's talked to Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), who introduced the Lautenberg Act and is ranking member of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over the EPA's budget. Udall is "well-positioned to insist that something as egregious as the House report isn't allowed to influence what EPA does," Rosenberg said.

Udall's office did not reply to requests for comment July 19.

Richard Denison, lead senior scientist with the Environmental Defense Fund, told Bloomberg BNA the agency doesn't need to start over again with the rules.

"EPA's existing assessments demonstrated that these chemicals pose huge health risks, and we believe EPA has a responsibility to promptly address these risks by finalizing their proposed bans," he said.

Politico

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/19/white-house-wiping-out-regulations-240742>

White House trumpets early success in wiping out regulations

By Andrew Restuccia, 7/19/17

The White House on Thursday released its first official scorecard on the administration's progress in taking a wrecking ball to former President Barack Obama's regulatory legacy, saying it has shelved or postponed hundreds of pending rules with many more on the chopping block.

"By amending and eliminating regulations that are ineffective, duplicative, and obsolete, the Administration can promote economic growth and innovation and protect individual liberty," the White House Office of Management and Budget said as it posted the rundown Thursday morning. It called its steps so far "the beginning of fundamental regulatory reform and a reorientation toward reducing unnecessary regulatory burden on the American people."

The anti-regulation push is perhaps the greatest success so far of Donald Trump's presidency — a contrast to the resistance he's faced on repealing Obamacare, restricting immigration, rewriting the tax code or building a border wall.

Trump's agencies have withdrawn or postponed hundreds of regulatory actions that the Obama administration had in the works late in 2016, OMB said in a preview provided to POLITICO late Wednesday.

OMB also boasted that the new administration has proposed astronomically fewer rules than Obama did during his early days in office. And it estimated that Trump's regulatory actions through last month will reduce economic burdens by \$22 million a year — in contrast with more than \$3 billion in annual burdens that Obama's agencies had imposed as of the same point in 2009.

The White House hadn't yet released its full data, making those estimates impossible to check. But Trump has made it clear that erasing regulations is one of the prime missions he has set for his administration. With Trump's legislative agenda stalled, administration officials are increasingly looking toward deregulation as an issue they can sell to his base ahead of the midterm elections.

"Government is using muscles it hasn't used in a really long time, exposing and removing redundant and unnecessary regulation," OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said in a statement.

Liberals have been increasingly dismayed by Trump's anti-regulation push, however.

"He's done tremendous damage," Rena Steinzor, a University of Maryland law professor who has tracked regulations for decades, told POLITICO in May. "I've been watching through six presidents, and all that pales in comparison to this."

The product that OMB was scheduled to release Thursday is the Trump administration's first update of the "Unified Agenda," a twice-a-year compilation of planned or expected regulatory actions across the executive branch.

The agenda normally attracts little attention from the media or the public, but Trump has scrambled the recipe by adding "deregulatory actions" to its name and mission. A more complete version of the Unified Agenda will be released in the fall, when agencies may have a better handle on how to carry out Trump's policies — including a mandate that they repeal two regulations for every new one they propose.

The Obama White House's final Unified Agenda included more than 3,300 regulatory actions, including

193 it deemed "economically significant."

In contrast, OMB said the Trump administration has shelved about 860 regulatory actions, either withdrawing them or moving them from "active status." Those include 469 regulatory actions that agencies have withdrawn altogether.

It said Trump's agencies have also proposed just 58 "economically significant" regulations, down about half from Obama's last year in office. The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs defines an economically significant regulation as a rule that could have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

Agencies have also taken at least 16 "deregulatory actions," according to OMB. Those include late Obama-era regulations that Trump wiped out with a stroke of a pen after Congress voted to block them during his first few months as president.

While the White House's latest numbers are new, Trump has made little secret of his anti-regulation crusade. His best-known targets have included Obama administration regulations limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, requiring restaurants to list calories on their menus and barring some mentally ill people from buying guns.

But OMB says much more is in the works. For example, it said, the Department of Transportation is preparing to offer passenger railroads "greater flexibility" in meeting crashworthiness standards, while the Labor Department will streamline approvals for apprenticeship programs and the EPA will abandon "a costly and premature plan to regulate oil and gas development" on certain Indian reservations.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/attorney-general-jeff-sessions-says-he-plans-to-stay-in-role-despite-trumps-comments-about-him/2017/07/20/527e53d4-6d51-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html?utm_term=.698359a53e84

Attorney General Jeff Sessions says he plans to stay in role, despite Trump's comments about him

By Matt Zapotosky and Sari Horwitz, 7/20/17

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Thursday that he plans to stay in his job despite the president's public assertion that he would not have nominated Sessions to the post had he known that he would recuse himself from the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

At a news conference ostensibly meant to announce the takedown of an illicit online marketplace, Sessions said he had the "honor of serving as attorney general," and he planned "to continue to do so as long as that is appropriate." Asked how he could keep working, having apparently lost President Trump's confidence, Sessions responded: "We're serving right now. The work we're doing today is the kind of work that we intend to continue.

"I'm totally confident that we can continue to run this office in an effective way," Sessions added. On Wednesday, the New York Times published an article about an interview with Trump in which the president said he would not have appointed Sessions attorney general had he known Sessions would recuse himself from the investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

"Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself he should have told me before he took the job, and I would have picked somebody else," Trump said, according to the New York Times.

Sessions's recusal came after The Washington Post reported that he had met with Russia's ambassador to the United States and had not disclosed the contacts when the matter came up at his congressional confirmation hearing. In the New York Times interview, Trump also criticized his attorney general for his responses to questions in that hearing, saying: "Jeff Sessions gave some bad answers. He gave some answers that were simple questions and should have been simple answers, but they weren't." Trump said Sessions's recusal was personally unfair to him as president.

"How do you take a job and then recuse yourself?" Trump said. "If he would have recused himself before the job, I would have said, 'Thanks, Jeff, but I'm not going to take you.' It's extremely unfair — and that's a mild word — to the president."

Sessions has said he recused himself because of his involvement with the Trump presidential campaign. As a result, Rod J. Rosenstein, whom Trump appointed as deputy attorney general, took charge of the probe, although Rosenstein would later appoint former FBI director Robert S. Mueller III as special counsel to oversee it.

Trump also criticized Rosenstein and Mueller in his New York Times interview, saying both men had conflicts in the Russia probe — Rosenstein because he recommended firing then-FBI Director James B. Comey, which could be part of Mueller's investigation, and Mueller because he interviewed to replace Comey.

Sessions had been scheduled to hold a news conference on the takedown of the illicit Internet marketplace AlphaBay before the news of Trump's interview broke, though it was clear from the moment the event started that reporters would not be focused on that. When officials opened the floor to questions, Sessions was asked how seriously he had considered resigning.

"We in this Department of Justice will continue every single day to work hard to serve the national interest, and we wholeheartedly join in the priorities of President Trump," he responded. He later asserted that his plan to continue in his role.

Rosenstein, too, said he was "proud" to be in the Justice Department, declining to address directly a question about Trump's criticism about him and Baltimore, where he worked as U.S. attorney. Trump had noted that the city had "very few Republicans."

Sessions was once thought to be one of Trump's closest advisers. He was the first senator to endorse Trump at a time when few Republican lawmakers supported the candidate, and early in the president's administration he seemed to have access to Trump whenever he wanted, an official said.

In public, Sessions wouldn't shy from linking his department's priorities with Trump's. When he directed federal prosecutors across the country Tuesday to make immigration cases a higher priority, for example, he declared in no uncertain terms, "This is the Trump era."

If Sessions were to resign or be fired, that could call into question the future of the special counsel

investigation. According to federal regulations, the special counsel reports to the attorney general, though because Sessions is recused, Mueller reports to Rosenstein. Were Sessions to be replaced at the top, Mueller would be overseen by his successor, who Trump would pick but who would require Senate confirmation. The attorney general can veto the special counsel's decisions but is not supposed to offer day-to-day supervision.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Beach, Christopher[beach.christopher@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 3/13/2018 2:11:16 PM
Subject: RE: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

Sounds good. I'll send something around shortly for approval.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 10:07 AM
To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Beach, Christopher <beach.christopher@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

Nice, James, please add this summary to the top of the email that you are sending to Helen.

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 9:15 AM
To: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Beach, Christopher <beach.christopher@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

Kelsey included the regional roundtable coverage in Morning Energy.

ROUNDTABLE ROUND-UP: With stacks of his "[year in review](#)" document piled high, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt held a "[regional roundtable](#)" with reporters Monday morning to discuss the year ahead and his achievements to date. Here are some of the stories that emerged

from the roundtable:

— Pruitt said he would sign a waiver allowing blends of 15 percent ethanol gasoline if he can do so legally, via the [Houston Chronicle](#).

— By month's end, Pruitt plans to have reviewed about 400 claims filed over damages sustained during the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster, via [The Denver Post](#).

— In states like Nevada, Pruitt touted the need for regulatory rollbacks to help economically, via the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#).

— A final move on Missouri's West Lake Superfund site could include excavating more than the 67 percent of the site, via the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [<mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 5:48 AM

To: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>

Subject: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 03/13/2018 05:45 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Ben Lefebvre and Daniel Lippman

IT'S SPECIAL ELECTION DAY: Voters in southeastern Pennsylvania will pick their new member of Congress today, and Democrats are hoping for a surprise upset in the coal country district that President Donald Trump won handily. The 18th District special election pits Republican Rick Saccone and Democrat Conor Lamb, and the latest polls show Lamb [leading](#) in the heavily blue-collar area, left open by the resignation of Republican incumbent Rep. Tim Murphy. Trump carried the district by 20 points in 2016.

On energy issues, Lamb lists "modern energy development" as one of his priorities, with calls for increased natural gas-extraction jobs. Lamb says government should not impede energy development and job creation, according to [his website](#), but notes the need for government "to enforce the law and hold companies accountable if they endanger workers or pollute our air or water." For his part, Saccone hasn't laid out his energy priorities on his campaign site, but he's previously touted coal production and [hit EPA for its regulations](#) during his time as a state lawmaker.

Lamb, a Marine and former federal prosecutor, spent Sunday with the United Mine Workers of America, where he spoke directly to retired coal miners on pensions and Social Security, the

Associated Press reported. "People have paid into these programs over the course of a lifetime," Laid said, some 40 miles outside of Pittsburgh. "I do not believe, as [House Speaker] Paul Ryan does, that these are entitlements or another form of welfare."

Meanwhile, Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, garnered support from the president, who stumped for him at a Saturday rally and tweeted another endorsement Monday morning. "Let's get someone from the heart of coal country, supporting your families, values and concerns," Saccone said of himself, before the president arrived Saturday. "I'm battle-tested and ready to serve." Saccone also joined Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke last month at an event just outside the district to announce new grants to clean up coal mines in the state, an appearance that has led Democrats to call for an investigation into whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act.

For Lamb to win the toss-up race, he'll need to run up his totals in Allegheny County, where Pittsburgh bleeds into the suburbs, Campaign Pro's Elena Schneider reports. The Democrat has spent a lot of time in Greene County, home to coal miners who were "really anti-Hillary," but are "open to Conor," said Rich Yakubic, a 67-year-old member of the UMW, who attended Lamb's rally Sunday. Elena breaks down what else to watch tonight here.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and the Renewable Fuels Association's Rachel Gantz was first to know former President Calvin Coolidge never used a telephone while in office. For today: Who was the only president to have no turnover in his Cabinet? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter @kelseytm, @Morning_Energy and @POLITICOPro.

***POLITICO Space** is our new, free weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age in Washington and beyond. Sign up today to start receiving the newsletter right at launch on April 6.*

ZINKE HEADS TO THE HILL: Zinke heads to Capitol Hill today for a Senate Energy hearing on the administration's fiscal 2019 budget proposal for DOI. Democrats will likely ask Zinke about his use of public funds, as well as reports of conflicts of interest for the former Montana congressman. Expect Democrats to also press the secretary on the state of Interior's offshore drilling plan, and whether public input at his agency is being heard. **If you go:** The hearing begins at 10 a.m. in 336 Dirksen. Watch it here.

NO SYMPOSIUM FOR ZINKE: Interior has canceled Zinke's appearance at the Energy & Environmental Symposium scheduled for Wednesday, event organizer Faegre Baker Daniels confirmed. The cancellation also comes after questions were raised about Faegre's lobbying for the reduction of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah on behalf of energy companies. Faegre is also where Andrew Wheeler — Trump's stalled pick for EPA's No. 2 spot — works as a principal. For those still jonesing for a Zinke fix after today's hearing, the secretary is scheduled to testify to the House Natural Resources Committee at 10 a.m. Thursday.

Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash will speak in Zinke's place Wednesday, a Faegre spokeswoman said. Updated guidance can be found here.

WHITEHOUSE HITS 200: Seventeen Democratic senators, including Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, will join Sheldon Whitehouse today as he delivers his 200th weekly address to the upper chamber. Since April 2012, Whitehouse has delivered remarks from the floor every week on various aspects of man-made climate change.

**** A message from Chevron:** At our Refinery Optimization Center in El Segundo, we're using advanced technologies to help monitor operations and deliver safer energy. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2Ge73Qw> **

HOUSE COMMITTEE CALLS OUT PREPA: The House Natural Resources Committee sent a letter to Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority's interim executive director on Monday, outlining recent allegations of "corruption and gross mismanagement" with the island's power restoration operations. "A member of the committee has heard from constituents currently working to restore power in Puerto Rico under [agreements with other electric utilities], that utility crews are delayed or unable to complete electrification projects because of a lack of materials" from PREPA, says the letter, signed by Chairman Rob Bishop and Republicans Bruce Westerman and Doug LaMalfa.

The letter cites an incident in which FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel raided a warehouse storing repair materials that PREPA did not acknowledge existed, Pro's Colin Wilhelm reports. Local media in Puerto Rico have also alleged that PREPA officials received bribes from local strip club owners to give them priority in power restoration, and ordered power restored to their own homes before other critical infrastructure. The lawmakers, whose panel has jurisdiction over Puerto Rico and other territories, want more information from PREPA about any open investigations it has into alleged misappropriation of resources or bribery by March 26. Read it here.

Meanwhile in the Virgin Islands: FEMA recommitted Monday to complete its long-haul response in the U.S. Virgin Islands, following damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria to the islands last summer. "We will be on the job until the territory tells us we've completed our work," said William Vogel, who serves as FEMA's coordinator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Read more here from Pro's Quint Forgey.

GOP WON'T BLOCK TARIFFS: Don't expect Republicans to do anything about the steel and aluminum tariffs they've spent the better half of the month worrying about — at least for now. GOP leaders signaled Monday that they won't try to pass legislation to override a president of their own party, POLITICO's Burgess Everett reports. Instead, they are hoping they can get the president to water down the tariffs, which have drawn condemnation from many in the energy industry. "That's clearly a long shot. But we're trying as best we can to persuade folks in the administration to scale this back to make it less harmful," said Sen. John Thune, the No. 3 GOP senator. "I don't think we can rely on Democrats. And moving something across the floor takes 60. And then you'd have to override a veto."

EPA SPARES PHILLY REFINER IN BANKRUPTCY SETTLEMENT: EPA will allow bankrupt refinery Philadelphia Energy Solutions to meet only a portion of its outstanding

obligation under the Renewable Fuel Standard as part of a [settlement filed](#) with the Bankruptcy Court in Delaware Monday. PES has blamed its financial failure on the RFS, and its bankruptcy spurred a series of meetings at the White House about how to resolve tensions between biofuel producers and some oil refiners over the program. In the future, PES will be expected to submit credits every six months, instead of annually. Reuters first broke the [news](#) of the settlement.

"EPA's action in the PES case just demonstrate the Agency's acknowledgement that RINs are the primary cause of PES' bankruptcy and the main impediment to its future viability," a refining source who is concerned about high compliance costs tells ME. The source added that the settlement does not change the need for substantial changes to the program in order to prevent PES from being "right back in the soup" next year.

Biofuels producers are irate. "We are evaluating the settlement and will comment on the proposal," Bob Dinneen, CEO of the Renewable Fuels Association, told ME in a statement. "But at first blush, this strikes us as rewarding bombast behavior and it sets an extraordinarily bad precedent."

ROUNDTABLE ROUND-UP: With stacks of his "[year in review](#)" document piled high, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt held a "[regional roundtable](#)" with reporters Monday morning to discuss the year ahead and his achievements to date. Here are some of the stories that emerged from the roundtable:

— Pruitt said he would sign a waiver allowing blends of 15 percent ethanol gasoline if he can do so legally, via the [Houston Chronicle](#).

— By month's end, Pruitt plans to have reviewed about 400 claims filed over damages sustained during the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster, via [The Denver Post](#).

— In states like Nevada, Pruitt touted the need for regulatory rollbacks to help economically, via the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#).

— A final move on Missouri's West Lake Superfund site could include excavating more than the 67 percent of the site, via the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

STATES CONTINUE THE FIGHT: The fight over Zinke's offshore drilling plan continues to play out on the state level, with officials vowing to fight the proposal by any means necessary, POLITICO New York's Danielle Muoio and Marie French report. Lawmakers hailing from California to New York are considering ways to block the proposal, the pair reports, including "laws to block the construction of pipelines or infrastructure in state-controlled waters that are needed to support drilling projects." Attorneys general have vowed to sue over Zinke's proposal at the earliest possible moment, while state agencies plan to object to any lease sales using their joint authority under federal law over coastal waters. Read more [here](#).

NELSON HOPES FOR NEW NASA PICK: With news of the acting head of NASA's retirement at the end of April, Florida Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) has called on the White House to re-do its nomination to head the agency permanently. "The White House needs to nominate a space

professional for NASA administrator who will actually garner strong bipartisan support. The current nominee doesn't have the votes," Nelson said in a [statement](#) on Robert Lightfoot's retirement. Lightfoot led the agency while the Senate has failed to confirm the administration's permanent choice: Oklahoma Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#), who was formally nominated in September and has been unable to win Democratic support due in part to his denial of climate change.

ROCKEFELLER-BACKED GROUP RECOMMENDS ON POLICY: The Rockefeller Foundation-created initiative, 100 Resilient Cities, today released a series of recommendations in four policy areas, including infrastructure and flood insurance. The recommendations, which have been endorsed by mayors in Boston, Pittsburgh, Miami and Honolulu, outline specific strategies for improvement, including the creation of "a national infrastructure bank to further private investments in resilience," as well as a coordinated effort by departments and agencies to increase efficiency of disaster response, by integrating future forecast and scenario data and analysis into decision-making, among other ideas. Read it [here](#).

MAIL CALL! BRING BACK THE TAX CREDIT: Ahead of this week's Ways and Means [hearing](#) on tax extenders, the National Biodiesel Board, and 45 other groups, sent a letter to congressional leadership, calling for the reinstatement of the biodiesel tax credit for 2018. Read it [here](#).

HAPPY SUNSHINE WEEK: Nonprofit watchdog group Cause of Action Institute sent a letter to Zinke on Monday taking issue with a September report from BLM on improving planning and NEPA processes, which called for "expanded exemptions" under the Freedom of Information Act. CoA called on Interior to rescind the recommendation and "recommit itself to operating in an open and transparent fashion in accordance with the FOIA." Read it [here](#).

STATE NEWS — NEW JERSEY SETTLES WITH 3: New Jersey has reached settlements totaling \$196.5 million with three petroleum companies — Sunoco, BP and Shell — in a decade-long legal battle over pollution caused by the release of methyl tertiary-butyl ether, a fuel additive that contaminated groundwater throughout the state, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal announced Monday. The three petroleum companies have each agreed to pay over \$60 million to resolve liability for environmental damages caused by the additive, [Danielle reports](#). The state's lawsuit was filed in 2007.

MOVER, SHAKER: Diane Regas started Monday as president and CEO of the Trust for Public Land. She most recently was executive director of Environmental Defense Fund.

QUICK HITS

- Oil bust was actually good for a town called "shale city," [Bloomberg](#).
- Trump Jr., donor have longtime undisclosed ties, [Associated Press](#).
- BLM blames missing comments on technology 'breakdown,' [E&E News](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

8:30 a.m. — The Global CCS Institute holds DC Forum on Carbon, Capture and Storage, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue

8:30 a.m. — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission holds its 30th annual Regulatory Information Conference, North Bethesda, Md.

9:00 a.m. — Solar Asset Management North America will hold its fifth edition, San Francisco

9:00 a.m. — The Atlantic Council discussion on "Venezuela's Oil Industry: Can It Survive?" 1030 15th St NW

10:00 a.m. — Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy's 2018 Energy Innovation Summit, National Harbor

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources hearing on the administration's FY 2019 budget request for Interior, 336 Dirksen

10:15 a.m. — Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on "The Freedom of Information Act: Examining the Administration's Progress on Reforms and Looking Ahead," 226 Dirksen

12:45 p.m. — Resources for the Future seminar on "Impacts of Lower Natural Gas Prices on Employment in the Manufacturing Sector," 1616 P St. NW

1:30 p.m. — U.S. Energy Association presentation on "Can algae really do CC?" 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW

6:00 p.m. — The Sunlight Foundation discussion on "The State of Environmental Transparency: When Political Interference Obstructs the Public's Right to Know," 1440 G Street NW

6:30 p.m. — John Cardinal Ribat of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, speaks to Congress on climate change, 650 Michigan Ave NE

7:00 p.m. — Envirorun hosts David Herring, director of communications and education at NOAA's Climate Program Office, 1875 K St NW

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from Chevron:** With a live 24-hour monitoring system, an infrared Eye in the Sky, and a team stationed around-the-clock, our high-tech Refinery Optimization Center in El Segundo, CA helps us monitor thousands of devices and deliver safer, reliable energy. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2Ge73Qw> **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/special-election-overtakes-coal-country-129280>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Poll: Democrat Lamb leads in Pa. special election [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider and Steven Shepard | 03/12/2018 01:00 PM EDT

PITTSBURGH — Democrat Conor Lamb heads into the final day of the special congressional election in western Pennsylvania with the lead, according to a [new public poll](#) released Monday.

Monmouth University used three different turnout models ahead of Tuesday's special election — and Lamb has the advantage in all three of them.

Lamb is squaring off against Republican Rick Saccone, a state legislator and Air Force veteran in a traditionally blue-collar district that backed President Donald Trump by 20 points in 2016. They're competing to replace GOP Rep. Tim Murphy, who resigned in October.

Lamb leads Saccone, 51 percent to 45 percent, the poll shows — using a turnout model that mirrors a Democratic surge that's appeared in other special elections throughout the last year. Three percent of likely voters are undecided, and 1 percent would support another candidate.

A Monmouth [poll](#) released in mid-February, using the same model, found Saccone with a slight edge, 49 percent to 46 percent.

The poll suggests Lamb can win even if that Democratic surge falls short, however. In a more restrictive turnout model — designed to mirror a lower-turnout electorate that typically votes in midterm elections — Lamb has a slim, 2-point lead, 49 percent to 47 percent. A higher-turnout scenario, more similar to a presidential election, produces a 7-point Lamb lead, 51 percent to 44 percent.

"When added to a potential Democratic surge that has been building for weeks, Lamb appears to have picked off enough Republican-leaning voters to take a lead going into this contest's final weekend," said Monmouth University pollster Patrick Murray. "It would mark an extraordinary swing from Trump's nearly 20-point victory here in 2016 if he could hold on to win."

Lamb, a former federal prosecutor, is running as a centrist Democrat. He has called for new leadership in both parties and said he would oppose Nancy Pelosi as leader.

Saccone has frustrated national Republicans with his lackluster fundraising, which has forced outside groups like Congressional Leadership Fund and the National Republican Congressional Committee to dump more than \$10 million into the district.

Republicans used that money to accuse Lamb of being aligned with Pelosi and to attack his tenure as a federal prosecutor.

End Citizens United and VoteVets, both progressive groups, gave Lamb some cover on TV ads,

totaling \$600,000.

Despite the barrage of attack ads, Lamb's negatives haven't ticked up significantly over the past few weeks, according to the poll. A majority of likely voters, 53 percent, have a favorable impression of Lamb, compared to 33 percent who view him unfavorably. Last month, Lamb's image rating stood at 49 percent favorable, versus 31 percent unfavorable.

Fewer voters, 47 percent, have a favorable opinion of Saccone, and 43 percent view him unfavorably.

The Monmouth poll was conducted March 8-11 — with most of the interviews coming before Trump's rally last Saturday night in the district. But the poll indicates Trump's backing of Saccone may be a wash for the Republican nominee.

Voters are evenly split on Trump: 49 percent approve his job performance, and the same percentage disapprove. The proportion of likely voters who strongly approve of Trump's job performance (39 percent) and strongly disapprove (41 percent) are also nearly identical.

At Saturday's rally for Saccone, Trump touted his recent decision to impose tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum. But voters in the district aren't convinced: 43 percent think the tariffs will help the local economy, compared to 36 percent who think they will hurt.

And virtually every voter surveyed, 96 percent, said the tariff decision hasn't caused them to change their choice of candidate. Three percent said the tariffs make them more likely to vote for Saccone, while 1 percent said they are more likely to vote for Lamb.

"Voters are divided on the potential impact of tariffs. It doesn't seem that the president's gambit paid off in this race if that was his intent," said Murray. Still, he noted that the poll was taken largely before the rally "and we don't have a clear picture of what impact that might" have.

"A Saccone victory is still well within the poll's margin of error," Murray said, "especially if a Democratic surge does not materialize in the Pittsburgh suburbs."

The poll surveyed 372 likely voters — contacted via a list of voters in the district who have participated in at least one of the last four primary or general elections, plus recent registrants — and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.1 percentage points.

Steven Shepard contributed to this report from Arlington, Va.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Republicans wage 11th-hour blitz in Pa. special election [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt | 03/12/2018 05:00 AM EDT

MOON TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multimillion-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly 2 to 1, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass-roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here,

Cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from 4 percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close. "Our people get out, we win, and there's no problem."

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for their coverage of the race, saying they had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring Saccone's accomplishments.

"The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin résumé and trying to make it sound like it's something big, when I have a big résumé that they try and scrunch down and don't say anything about," he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a "really good person," told his supporters to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy," and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb's support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb's pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

"Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions," say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he "abandoned PA labor unions," who were "outraged" by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb "supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment."

As they funneled into Trump's rally on Saturday, some of the president's supporters conceded

they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative district.

"I've seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood," said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

"A lot of people I've heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas," she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president's loyalists questioned whether Trump should skip the campaign event, worried that he'd take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

"If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president," said David Urban, who oversaw Trump's 2016 campaign in the state. "It reminds me of, 'Heads I lose, tails you win.'"

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Trump pushes support for Saccone a day before election [Back](#)

By Rebecca Morin | 03/12/2018 11:39 AM EDT

President Donald Trump on Monday reinforced his endorsement for Rick Saccone a day before Pennsylvania's special election while at the same time criticizing Saccone's opponent as being allied with Nancy Pelosi.

"The Pittsburgh Post Gazette just endorsed Rick Saccone for Congress. He will be much better for steel and business. Very strong on experience and what our Country needs. Lamb will always vote for Pelosi and Dems....Will raise taxes, weak on Crime and Border," the president tweeted Monday morning.

Saccone has been viewed by [some in his party](#) as a lackluster candidate, and has struggled despite Trump winning the district by nearly 20 points during the 2016 election.

The Post-Gazette's editorial board on Sunday [endorsed](#) Saccone. The endorsement said the state representative "has a wealth of experience and an intimate knowledge of much of the district, because he has represented a part of it in the Legislature."

"He is a good fit for the district and would be an effective representative for it from his first day on the job," according to the endorsement.

Trump also expressed support for Saccone on Saturday during a rally in Pennsylvania. He urged rally attendees to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy" and said, "We need Republicans in office."

The president also blasted Lamb at the rally by saying that he is "trying to act like a Republican" but will not side with the GOP once in office.

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Democrats seek probe into whether Zinke violated Hatch Act [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/07/2018 01:24 PM EDT

Two senior House Natural Resources Democrats are [asking](#) the Office of the Special Counsel to investigate whether Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke violated the Hatch Act with an event close to the boundaries of the upcoming special congressional election in Pennsylvania.

State Rep. Rick Saccone, the Republican candidate for the open House seat, attended the Feb. 24 event during which Zinke announced grants to help clean up abandoned mining sites nationwide, including \$56 million in the state. Zinke later appeared on "Fox News" for [an interview](#) during which host Neil Cavuto asked him about the special election.

Ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) questioned why the agency selected a site one mile from Pennsylvania's 18th district less than three weeks before the special election, currently considered a toss up. The Hatch Act generally bans government officials from using public resources to promote political campaigns. Grijalva and McEachin say Zinke's appearance in Pennsylvania raises several red flags given its proximity to the election.

"Only a full investigation can clarify whether Secretary Zinke violated the Hatch Act when traveling to the PA-18 boundaries to announce [abandoned mine lands] funding," they wrote. "We urge you to pursue it."

An Interior spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The request for an investigation comes one day after the Office of Special Counsel found White House counselor Kellyanne Conway [violated](#) the statute by advocating for one candidate during Alabama's special Senate race.

To view online [click here](#).

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Interior spent \$139K on Zinke office doors [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/08/2018 05:58 PM EDT

The Interior Department is spending \$139,000 for new doors for Secretary Ryan Zinke's office suite, according to [records](#) posted online.

The work was recommended by Interior career facilities and security officials, an agency spokeswoman said, not by Zinke.

"The secretary was not aware of this contract but agrees that this is a lot of money for demo, install, materials, and labor," Heather Swift, the spokeswoman, said in a statement.

The award to Maryland-based Conquest Solutions LLC was first reported by the [Associated Press](#). The work involves replacing three sets of double doors, including two that open onto a balcony and leak during rain storms, the AP reported. An existing set of doors to Zinke's office from a hallway do not have a lock, so the security will be upgraded with the new doors.

Swift said the work is part of a "decade-long modernization of the historic FDR-era building."

"Between regulations that require historic preservation and outdated government procurement rules, the costs for everything from pencils to printing to doors is astronomical. This is a perfect example of why the Secretary believes we need to reform procurement processes."

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson drew criticism recently over news that HUD would spend \$31,000 on a dining set. That order was subsequently canceled.

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Trump's Interior chief 'hopping around from campaign event to campaign event' [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 10/05/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO — raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels "give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business."

Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as "a little BS."

But some ethics advocates say Zinke's attendance at a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct, even if he crossed no legal red lines.

"It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen.

The secretary is already under investigation by his department's inspector general over his use of taxpayer-funded private planes for some of the trips, and the Office of Special Counsel is looking into an activist group's allegations that he violated the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activism by federal employees. The White House has cracked down on Cabinet members' travel habits following former HHS Secretary Tom Price's resignation on Friday, which occurred after POLITICO reported on his own expensive flights.

Zinke visited the Virgin Islands from March 30 to April 1 on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. On his first day, following a "veterans meet and greet" and a reception with Gov. Kenneth Mapp, he appeared in his personal capacity at a March fundraiser for the local Republican Party at the patio bar of the Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix, department records show.

Tickets for the fundraiser ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple to be an event "Patron," according to Zinke's official calendar and a copy of the invitation. Patrons and members of the host committee, who paid \$1,500 per couple, could get a photo with Zinke at the start of the event, which was attended by local party members and elected officials.

The following day, Zinke took a \$3,150 flight on a private plane, paid for by the department, from St. Croix to official functions on St. Thomas and returned later that evening. Interior Department officials said there was no other way to accommodate his schedule, which included

official events on both islands commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Dutch government transferring control of the islands to the United States.

Zinke is allowed to engage in partisan political activity in a "purely personal (not official) capacity," so long as he does not use government resources, according to Interior Department guidelines on the Hatch Act and other federal laws. The invitation to the GOP fundraiser did not identify Zinke by his official title and included a disclaimer that the money is being solicited by the local party and "not by any federal official."

All told, Zinke has spent around \$20,000 for three charter flights as secretary, nowhere near the \$1 million tab Price racked up on non-commercial trips. But he has on numerous occasions attended political receptions, spoken to influential conservative groups or appeared alongside past campaign donors during trips has taken outside of Washington, D.C., for official department business.

In one instance, Zinke gave a motivational speech for a professional hockey team owned by a major campaign contributor that he said was official business — and which required him to charter a \$12,000 flight to Montana for an appearance at the Western Governors Association the next day.

In another case, during a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Denver, he was introduced via a recorded voice as the Interior secretary and Zinke proceeded to talk about the agency's priorities. The summit was organized by the Centennial Institute, which bills itself as Colorado Christian University's think tank and is a part of the State Policy Network of organizations that collectively push for conservative state-level legislation.

An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor say whether he would keep raising political money. The agency also has yet to post Zinke's trip expenses involving any of the political events.

"The Interior Department under the Trump Administration has always and will always work to ensure all officials follow appropriate rules and regulations when traveling, including seeking commercial options at all times appropriate and feasible, to ensure the efficient use of government resources," spokeswoman Heather Swift said in a statement.

Swift did not respond to questions about whether the department had gotten reimbursement for the political portion of Zinke's three-day Virgin Islands trip, as the head of one watchdog group says it should have.

"Some of this travel is clearly political and that part of the travel should have been paid for by the RNC, NRCC, state political parties, a campaign committee or Zinke personally," said Daniel Stevens, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability.

No payments to the department are listed in the Virgin Islands Republican Party's FEC records.

Zinke is not the first Interior secretary, or Cabinet member, to have his activities questioned.

In 2012, a watchdog group called Cause of Action urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether President Barack Obama's then- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the Hatch Act while taking an Obama reelection campaign RV tour of Colorado with a couple of lawmakers and the state lieutenant governor. Local organizers of one stop on that tour had billed Salazar on its online events calendar as attending the political rally in his official role. OSC would not say whether its investigation uncovered any problems, but travel records Interior has posted show that one of Salazar's aides had told the tour's coordinator the schedule "should not refer to (Salazar as) 'secretary.'" Salazar did not respond to a request for comment.

A former Salazar aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Obama administration generally tried to avoid scheduling political events that coincided with official travel because it was difficult to divvy up what expenses should be reimbursed by a campaign.

The special counsel's office found Obama HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in violation of the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" by endorsing a candidate for North Carolina governor during a speech she made in her official capacity. Sebelius tried to scrub the violation by reclassifying the appearance as political and reimbursing the Treasury Department for costs associated with the trip.

Sally Jewell, who was Interior secretary during Obama's second term, said Zinke was within his rights to appear at the fundraiser in the Virgin Islands. Jewell said she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell while in Obama's Cabinet, though she paid her own way to Washington state and was not identified by her official title.

"If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side, I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said in an interview.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt canceled his scheduled appearance at a fundraiser for the Oklahoma Republican Party in April because an invitation had identified him by his official title and said he would discuss his work at the agency. EPA ethics officials said he would have been cleared to attend the event if not for that language on the invitation.

Watchdog groups say Zinke's behavior fits a pattern for Trump's Cabinet.

"These government resources have been abused by this administration," said Virginia Canter, an executive branch ethics counsel for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington who previously worked as an ethics official for Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Obama. "To the extent that some of that supports their political ambitions is inconsistent with the intent of this authority."

The Campaign for Accountability called on Interior's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act or department ethics rules with his speech to the hockey team, which the group said appeared to be a favor for a donor. Interior's IG office announced its investigation earlier this week, and OSC told the Campaign for

Accountability that it was looking into the group's complaint, according to an email shared with POLITICO. The OSC declined to comment.

Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) have asked Interior's IG to also look into any trips on which the secretary was accompanied by his wife, Lola Zinke, who is chairing the campaign of Montana Republican Troy Downing, a candidate to unseat Democratic Sen. Jon Tester next year. Swift said Lola Zinke was not in the Virgin Islands and has paid her own way whenever she has traveled with her husband on official trips.

Many who know him see Zinke's travels as an attempt to keep in touch with political contacts as he contemplates what he will do after leaving the Trump administration. Back home, the 55-year-old former Montana congressman is seen as an attractive candidate for the open-seat governor's race in 2020, when Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock will have to step down because of term limits.

"I think he's definitely got political aspirations; that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a Montana-based sportsman group that supported Zinke's bid for Interior secretary. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

The Virgin Islands trip was Zinke's first interaction with big donors or influential conservative groups during his travel as Interior secretary.

A weeklong trip in May that took Zinke through Montana, Utah and California also offered a chance to squeeze in some political events.

Zinke delivered the keynote speech at the RNC spring meeting on May 11 in Coronado, Calif. Zinke had flown to California the previous night, after several days touring monuments in Utah, and the RNC speech was his only event in the state aside from a meeting earlier that afternoon with Rep. Amata Radewagen, the Republican delegate from American Samoa, and members of the American Tunaboat Association.

The next day, Zinke flew back to Montana, where he joined Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and Vice President Mike Pence to tour a coal mine on the Crow Indian reservation operated by the Westmoreland Coal Co.

The trip offered Zinke and Pence an opportunity to tout the Trump administration's work to promote new coal mining on federal lands — and it allowed them to make a brief detour to promote Zinke's congressional replacement. That Friday night, Zinke, Pence and Daines attended a political rally for GOP candidate Greg Gianforte, and Zinke attended a get-out-the vote event for the Montana GOP the next day.

Zinke apparently paid for his return trip to Washington out of his own pocket — it was marked "personal travel" on his calendar, a designation not applied to the other flights on that trip.

Gianforte, whose wife is a major political donor in Montana, won the May 25 special election to take over Zinke's House seat.

Greg and Susan Gianforte donated more than \$10,000 to Zinke's 2016 congressional campaign and another \$10,000 to a joint Zinke-Daines PAC, according to federal records. The couple donated \$5,000 for his earlier run for Congress.

Zinke met with big influencers and donors in June as well.

On June 25, he flew from D.C. to Reno, Nev., where his only scheduled event was a meeting of the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a group of Republican attorneys general that has been linked to the Koch brothers, where he spoke and took questions for about 30 minutes, according to his schedule.

After his remarks, he sat at a dinner table with Montana's attorney general, the government relations specialist for the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Las Vegas Sands, and Koch Industries lobbyist Allen Richardson, Interior documents show.

The next day, Zinke flew to Las Vegas for an event on public lands in nearby Pahrump, Nev., and a speech that night to the National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights. Bill Foley, the team owner and chairman of Fidelity, introduced Zinke. Foley donated \$7,800 to Zinke's 2014 campaign, while employees and PACs associated with Fidelity and related companies gave another \$180,000. Interior officials said the speech to the NHL team was part of Zinke's official duties, and they pointed to scheduling conflicts it created to justify his use of a \$12,000 private plane to get to a Western Governors Association meeting in Montana the next day.

In July, Zinke spoke to several conservative groups in Colorado during a three-day trip that also included tours of Interior Department facilities in the state. He flew into Denver on July 20 so he could appear that evening at a closed-door reception for the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group of conservative state legislators, lobbyists and industry groups that has pushed for more state control over federal lands.

And over the next two days, he was a featured speaker at a Republican committee roundtable and attended the Western Conservative Summit in Denver.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

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Lawmakers want more information on alleged corruption at Puerto Rico utility [Back](#)

By Colin Wilhelm | 03/12/2018 05:56 PM EDT

Members of the House Natural Resources Committee, including Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah), are demanding more information from Puerto Rico's power utility as part of a congressional investigation into alleged corruption.

"Billions of taxpayer dollars are pledged to help Puerto Rico, but a lack of faith in Puerto Rico's institutions remains a major barrier to recovery," Bishop and two other Republicans [wrote](#) to the utility's interim executive director.

"A member of the committee has heard from constituents currently working to restore power in Puerto Rico under [agreements with other electric utilities], that utility crews are delayed or unable to complete electrification projects because of a lack of materials" from the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority.

The letter cites an incident in which FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel raided a warehouse storing repair materials that PREPA did not acknowledge existed. Local media in Puerto Rico have also alleged that PREPA officials received bribes from local strip club owners to give them priority in power restoration, and ordered power restored to their own homes before other critical infrastructure, like San Juan's main hospital and airport.

The lawmakers, whose panel has jurisdiction over Puerto Rico and other territories, want more information from PREPA about any open investigations it has into alleged misappropriation of resources or bribery following Hurricane Maria, which struck the commonwealth last fall.

There have been multiple other reports of alleged corruption or mismanagement related to PREPA in the months following Maria's landfall. That includes a now-canceled \$300 million federal-backed contract to a small Montana company that the utility authorized over objections from legal counsel.

PREPA has struggled to fully restore power in Puerto Rico nearly six months after the hurricane hit.

Since then Congress passed several aid packages, including \$2 billion in grants earmarked for repairing and improving Puerto Rico's electrical grid. The commonwealth government has wrestled with the Trump administration over nearly \$5 billion in additional loan funds it says it needs to help shore up the utility, which already struggled with service outages and \$9 billion in debt prior to the storm.

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FEMA commits to long-haul response in U.S. Virgin Islands [Back](#)

By Quint Forgey | 03/12/2018 02:06 PM EDT

A power outage abruptly ended a congressional field hearing today in the U.S. Virgin Islands as local officials complained of slow federal response to last year's hurricanes.

"We're certainly not in the dark on this issue," quipped Rep. [Blake Farenthold](#) (R-Texas), chairman of the House Oversight Subcommittee on Interior, Energy and the Environment.

The ironic electricity lapse highlights the U.S. territory's ongoing woes after Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged the islands late last summer, knocking out power to most of the region for several weeks. But a top Federal Emergency Management Agency official said the federal government will fully see the recovery through.

"We will be on the job until the territory tells us we've completed our work," said William Vogel, who serves as the agency's coordinator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Vogel said the agency has established 10 disaster recovery centers across the islands and made 92 local hires to better coordinate with area officials.

"The recovery is far from over," said Rep. [Stacey Plaskett](#), the U.S. Virgin Islands' delegate to Congress, noting that the territory's residents will "continue to demand massive amounts of aid."

U.S. Virgin Islands Senate President Myron Jackson complained that the burden of cleaning up mountains of trash fell immediately to residents and the local public works department following the storms, and that coordination between federal and local emergency officials was "very chaotic."

"We really need to revisit how FEMA and the territory protocols are put in place," he said.

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Senate GOP leaders won't try to block Trump's tariffs [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 03/12/2018 07:38 PM EDT

Republicans have been freaking out about President Donald Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs all month. But don't expect them to do anything about it just yet.

GOP leaders are shying away from a direct confrontation with Trump over trade, and signaled Monday that they won't try to pass legislation to override a president of their own party. They are instead hoping they can get the president to water down the tariffs as much as they can.

Ultimately, they're loath to risk a brutal showdown, even over an issue that's provoked more GOP outrage toward Trump than any other one of his policies or controversies.

So even though several senators are introducing proposals to stop Trump's 25 percent tariff on imported steel and 10 percent tariff on imported aluminum, key Republicans are in no mood for a high-profile fight with Trump.

"That's clearly a long shot. But we're trying as best we can to persuade folks in the administration to scale this back to make it less harmful," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 GOP senator. "I don't think we can rely on Democrats. And moving something across the floor takes 60. And then you'd have to override a veto."

"It may be more of a back and forth between the executive branch and Congress rather than actual legislation," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). "We're making progress without legislation."

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) officially introduced his bill to nullify Trump's tariffs on Monday afternoon and Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) has proposed requiring congressional approval for trade actions. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has so far expressed no interest in taking Trump on via legislation, according to senators and aides. Asked for a comment, McConnell's office pointed to his earlier remarks expressing reservation about the tariffs.

Flake acknowledged that his leaders do not want to move forward with his bill but insisted that "there are a lot of members who want to vote this way." On Thursday, the Senate GOP spent its party lunch discussing if they have any recourse against Trump; on Sunday Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) said he would support Flake's bill but doubted it could pass.

Facing the steep veto override threshold that would require at least 16 Democrats in support, Republicans are trying an easier road. Many of McConnell's members are hoping Trump simply grants enough exemptions to U.S. allies to make the new metal tariffs palatable, even though a large swath of GOP senators have said Trump's move will kill jobs and amount to a tax increase.

"I'm not a fan of the trade policy but I don't think we're there yet," said Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) of legislation to block Trump. "I think it may work itself out"

"I'm not really happy with what the president's done," said Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). "I'm hoping we can resolve this. And the president's been thinking it over too."

Hatch said last week he hoped Congress might overturn the tariffs. He said that was still on his mind, but added: "But I'm open to almost anything."

Republicans argue they have already made progress with Trump, who has granted exemptions to Canada and Mexico while talks on NAFTA continue. They are hoping he soon goes further and grants similar outs for countries like the United Kingdom and Australia. And while that happens, the Senate is likely to hold hearings on the impact of Trump's policies, Republicans said.

Hill Republicans reason that's far more effective than threatening Trump with legislative action and becoming engulfed in an intraparty war up and down Pennsylvania Avenue while the GOP defends its tenuous congressional majorities. Plus, taking Trump on might just might provoke him further.

"Senate Republicans overwhelmingly oppose these tariffs, but the question is how do we lessen the impact?" said a senior Republican aide. "A bill on the floor that would get a veto would only make things worse with a president who's never shied away from running against Congress."

That's not to say Republicans are happy with where they find themselves, almost unanimously panning Trump's proposals even as they doubt they can do anything about it.

"It would be better if Congress had more of a role," Thune said. "But we gave that away."

To view online [click here](#).

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Lightfoot's retirement prompts calls for permanent NASA leader [Back](#)

By Jacqueline Klimas | 03/12/2018 03:58 PM EDT

The acting head of NASA will retire at the end of April, sparking calls on Capitol Hill for the administration to find a permanent head for the nation's space exploration agency.

In a [memo](#) to staff today, Robert Lightfoot promised to work with the White House on a smooth transition to a new administrator and thanked employees for the "unbelievable ride."

He has been the acting head of NASA for all 14 months of Donald Trump's presidency, while the Senate has failed to confirm the administration's permanent choice to lead the agency, Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#) (R-Okla.).

Bridenstine, who was formally nominated in September, has been unable to win Democratic support because of his past remarks criticizing the LGBT community and denial of climate change.

"The White House needs to nominate a space professional for NASA administrator who will actually garner strong bipartisan support. The current nominee doesn't have the votes," Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) (D-Fla.) said in a statement on Lightfoot's retirement.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Fri 4/20/2018 7:07:48 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: 3 staffers leaving biotechnology trade group — New task force will fight sexual harassment of lobbyists — Invariant adds a Republican

By Theodoric Meyer and Marianne LeVine | 04/20/2018 03:06 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Garrett Ross

FIRST IN PI - THREE STAFFERS LEAVING BIOTECHNOLOGY TRADE GROUP:

Two lobbyists and a senior official at the **Biotechnology Innovation Organization** are moving on, according to a source familiar with the matter. **Gary Andres**, the trade group's senior executive vice president for public affairs, is leaving to join the House Ways and Means Committee as majority staff director. (He'll replace **David Stewart**, who just left to join **Squire Patton Boggs**.) **Sarah Kyle**, a lobbyist for the trade group, is joining **Eli Lilly** as a senior adviser. And another lobbyist, **Taylor Booth**, is headed to **Novartis**. The organization didn't respond to a request for comment.

NEW TASK FORCE WILL COMBAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF LOBBYISTS: The **National Institute for Lobbying and Ethics** is starting up a new task force to fight sexual harassment in the influence industry. The task force, which is set to meet for the first time next week, will come up with "extensive recommendations" for lobbying firms to help prevent harassment and will hold a series of events that spotlight aspects of the problem, **Paul Miller**, a lobbyist at **Miller/Wenhold Capitol Strategies** and the institute's president, told PI. While sexual harassment allegations have led several members of Congress to resign or not run for reelection, K Street has seemed less shaken than other industries by the flurry of stories on the issue that followed The New York Times' reporting on Harvey Weinstein. "I'm honestly surprised we haven't heard a story from our community," Miller said.

- **POLITICO** is committed to reporting on allegations of sexual harassment on K Street and elsewhere in Washington. Do you know of a member, a congressional staffer or a fellow lobbyist with a reputation for harassing lobbyists? Please get in touch: tmeyer@politico.com or mlevine@politico.com.

INVARIANT ADDS A REPUBLICAN: The Republican lobbyist **Katie Wise** is joining **Invariant**. She was previously vice president of legislation for the **Federation of American Hospitals**, and has also worked on Capitol Hill, where she was legislative director for Reps. **Vern Buchanan** (R-Fla.) and **Mike Fitzpatrick** (R-Pa.). Wise will join fellow Republicans **Janie Blanco**, **Sean Joyce**, **Annie Palisi** and **Larissa Martinez**, who was on President **Donald Trump**'s transition team, at Invariant, whose founder, **Heather Podesta**, is, of course, a prominent Democrat.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips always appreciated: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

POLITICO Space is our new weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age. [Sign up](#) today.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US: **Chris Frates** sent the very first edition of this newsletter seven years ago today. Since then, seven other reporters have had the honor of helming PI, including **Dave Levinthal** (now at the **Center for Public Integrity**), **Anna Palmer** (now of Playbook fame), **Byron Tau** (now at **The Wall Street Journal**), **Tarini Parti** (now at **BuzzFeed News**) and **Isaac Arnsdorf** (now at **ProPublica**), as well as the two of us. Thanks to everyone who's been reading since the early days for sticking with us.

- We highlighted an item from the first edition last year that's too good not to mention again. Headlined "LINE OF THE DAY," it reads: "From a Republican lobbyist upon receiving an email from the RNC that Donald Trump will attend a May 6 fundraiser at Trump National Golf Course: 'This is a sign of the apocalypse.'" Other boldfaced names from the first edition: **Matt Blunt** of the **American Automotive Policy Council**; **Rich Gold** of **Holland & Knight**; **Jonathon Jones** of Peck Madigan Jones and Stewart (now styled **Peck Madigan Jones**); and Jamie Brown Hantman (now at the JBH Group).

- What do you miss about the old PI? Which vintage features should we bring back? What would you like to see in PI in the next seven years? Let us know: tmeyer@politico.com and mlevine@politico.com.

THE LATEST ON BROIDY: From **The Intercept's** **Ryan Grim** and **Alex Emmons**: "Shortly after President Donald Trump was inaugurated last year, top Republican fundraiser **Elliott Broidy** offered Russian gas giant Novatek a \$26 million lobbying plan aimed at removing the company from a U.S. sanctions list, according to documents obtained by The Intercept. ... Broidy proposed arranging meetings with key White House and congressional leaders and generating op-eds and other articles favorable to the Russian company, along with a full suite of lobbying activities to be undertaken by consultants brought on board. Yet even as he offered those services, Broidy was adamant that his company, Fieldcrest Advisors LLC, would not perform lobbying services but would hire others to do it." [Full story](#).

- **The New York Times' David Kirkpatrick** and **Mark Mazzetti**, meanwhile, report that "White House aides were worried enough about [a visit](#) last year by Prime Minister **Najib Razak** of Malaysia, under investigation by American prosecutors who say he embezzled \$3.5 billion from a state investment fund, that he was denied the customary photo in the Oval Office with President Trump. But that did not stop [Broidy] from seeking to use his White House ties to press for Mr. Trump to play a golf game with Mr. Najib, who had the authority over negotiations for a lucrative Malaysian contract with Mr. Broidy's private defense company, according to documents obtained by The New York Times." [Full story](#).

POLITICO Space is our new weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age. [Sign up](#) today.

HOW BGR LANDED A FOREIGN LOBBYING CONTRACT: **Corey Lewandowski** helped the **BGR Group** land its contract working for a Polish state-owned defense company -

business **Jill Kelley** was trying to secure as well, **The Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay** and **Asawin Suebsaeng** report. "In a July 2017 email to Lewandowski, reviewed by The Daily Beast, **Ed Rogers**, the veteran Republican operative and chairman of the firm BGR Group, inquired about Lewandowski's contacts with the Azerbaijani ambassador to the U.S., whom BGR had represented since March. 'Corey, we're [sic] you able to talk to the Azerbaijan ambassador?' Rogers asked. 'Call and let's catch up for 15 minutes.'" [Full story.](#)

CAMPAIGN FOR ACCOUNTABILITY CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION INTO CRAPO FUNDRAISER: "A watchdog group is calling for an investigation into [Sen.] **Mike Crapo's** (R-Idaho) use of a Capitol Hill condo at the center of an ethics scandal surrounding EPA Administrator **Scott Pruitt**," **POLITICO's Zachary Warmbrodt** reports. "**Campaign for Accountability** filed a [complaint](#) with the [Federal Election Commission on Thursday] alleging that political committees associated with the Idaho Republican failed to properly disclose fundraising activities at the condo, which Pruitt [rented](#) from its lobbyist owner **Vicki Hart** for \$50 per night. Hart's husband is also a lobbyist." [Full story.](#)

IF YOU MISSED IT THURSDAY: Health insurers have been skewered by the president and stymied in Congress, but the new leader of **America's Health Insurance Plans** told **POLITICO's Dan Diamond** that his association hasn't lost any juice on Capitol Hill, despite losing some of its biggest members. "We are relevant today as we've ever been," **Matt Eyles**, who takes over as AHIP's next leader June 1, said on **POLITICO's "Pulse Check"** podcast. "People come to us because they want to know what the insurers think."

- Measured by achievements and lobbying dollars, AHIP lost influence and resources over the last several years. Health insurers were also a punching bag during last year's fight over the future of the Affordable Care Act, when Trump frequently distorted their profits and [bragged](#) when their stocks fell. Eyles said his key task is to educate lawmakers and political appointees, given that "there's such misunderstanding about the health insurance industry." He suggested he'd have a fresh political slate to make those pitches, noting that current AHIP leader **Marilyn Tavenner** spent five years as an Obama appointee before joining the insurers' lobbying group. **Listen to the podcast [here](#).**

JOBS REPORT:

- The **Motion Picture Association of America** has hired **Kaelan Hollon** as vice president for communications, working on content protection and international issues. She previously worked for **Teva Pharmaceuticals**. The association also promoted **Alicia Leahy** to vice president for government affairs.

- **Jim Esquea**, a former Department of Health and Human Services assistant secretary, has joined the federal affairs team at **JUUL Labs**, an e-cigarette maker, per **POLITICO Pulse**.

- **Michael Huerta**, a former administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, has joined **Delta Air Lines'** board of directors, **POLITICO's Brianna Gurciullo** [reports](#).

SPOTTED: At a roundtable discussion Thursday night at **EFB Advocacy's** offices on how the

Senate passed the tax bill, H.R. 1 (115), featuring **Mark Prater** of the Senate Finance Committee and **Brendan Dunn** of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's office, according to a PI tipster: **John Feehery** of EFB, who moderated the event, and his colleagues **John Easton** and **Adam Belmar**; **Jack Smedile** of the **National Association of Broadcasters**; **Keith Murphy** of **Viacom**; **Jill Kozeny** of Sen. Chuck Grassley's (R-Iowa) office; **Brendon Plack** of Sen. John Thune's (R-S.D.) office; **Dave Popp** and **Erica Suares** of McConnell's office; **Kerry Feehery** of **Holland & Knight**; **Jack Bartling** of **JPMorgan Chase**; **Paul Vinovich** of the Senate Budget Committee; **Drew Cantor** of **Peck Madigan Jones**; **Holly Lass** of **American Express**; **Doug Schwartz** of **CGCN Group**; **Chris Miller** of **Crossroads Strategies** ; and **John O'Neill** of **Harbinger Strategies**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

None

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.
Alcalde & Fay: City of Oviedo, FL
APCO Worldwide LLC: Global Citizen
Arent Fox LLP: Pernod Ricard USA, LLC
Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC: Neighborhood House Association
Carliner Strategies LLC: Humanity United Action
Constantinople & Vallone Consulting LLC: Evinco Terminals, LLC
Constantinople & Vallone Consulting LLC: Nexus Consortium, Inc.
Cornerstone Government Affairs, Inc.: American Gaming Association
Ervin Hill Strategy: American Cervid Alliance
Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting: Pear Therapeutics
Farragut Partners LLP: National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care
FTI Government Affairs: Maxar Technologies Holdings Inc.
Harbinger Strategies, LLC: Allstate
Hill Strategy, LLC: Egan-Jones Ratings Company
Interel US: National Association Of State Aviation Officials
Kelley Drye & Warren LLP: Planet Technologies
Key Impact Strategies: City of Biloxi
Management & Government Resources: Remedy NJ / Remedy Columbia
Mr. David Gencarelli: Mobile Surgery International
MWW Group LLC: United Way of Northern New Jersey
Natural Resource Results LLC: New Venture Fund
Olsson, Frank, Weeda, Terman & Matz, PC: AdvaMed
Olsson, Frank, Weeda, Terman & Matz, PC: Edwards Lifesciences
Smith Consulting Group, Inc.: Salick Comprehensive Diabetes Centers, Inc.

Squire Patton Boggs: Forest City Realty Trust, Inc.
Squire Patton Boggs: SK hynix America, Inc.
Strategic Marketing Innovations: Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics
Tonio Burgos & Associates, Inc.: American Airpower Museum
Viking Navigation LLC: Iowa Interstate Railroad, LTD
VNF Solutions LLC: Sitnasuak Native Corporation

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

AJW, Inc.: Environmental Defense Action Fund
Alston & Bird LLP: Bridgepoint Education
Alston & Bird LLP: Diebold Nixdorf, Inc.
Alston & Bird LLP: Panhandle for Education and Good Government, Inc.
Alston & Bird LLP: The McGrath Group (on behalf of Allsup, Inc.)
Alcalde & Fay: Orlando Melbourne International Airport
Arent Fox LLP: Conant Automotive Resources, LLC
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Aeroflow Healthcare
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Depomed Inc.
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Edge Therapeutics, Inc.
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Lincoln Financial Group
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Ophthotech Corp.
Baker & Hostetler LLP: Prospect Medical Holdings, Inc.
Barnes & Thornburg, LLP: Pinnacle Transportation Systems, Inc.
Blank Rome Government Relations: Blank Rome LLP (on behalf of Kettler International, Inc.)
Bose Public Affairs Group: Cryopoint, LLC
Bose Public Affairs Group: MorphoTrust USA
Bose Public Affairs Group: National Network to End Domestic Violence
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Access Industries
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Emaar, USA
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP: Merrill Law, P.C., on behalf of Soaren Management LLC
Capitol Hill Consulting Group: Grand Strand Business Association
Capitol Tax Partners, LLP: Raytheon Company
Capitol Tax Partners, LLP: Soap Creek Energy
Capitol Tax Partners, LLP: State Street Bank & Trust Company
Capstone National Partners: Global Witness Publishing, Inc.
Capstone National Partners: MGIC
Carmen Group Incorporated: Tenor Capital Management Company, L.P.
CGCN Group, LLC (formerly known as Clark Geduldig Cranford & Nielsen, LLC): MBI, Inc.
Chartwell Strategy Group LLC: Mainstreet Asset Management, Inc.
Cogent Strategies LLC: SPIE - the international society for optics and photonics
Constantine Cannon, LLP: Purdue Pharma L P
Covington & Burling LLP: Univision Communications Inc
Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies: Keystone Outdoor Advertising
Crossroads Strategies, LLC: The Interstate 11 Coalition
Cypress Advocacy, LLC: Loews Government Affairs Services Inc (Formerly Known As Mlba

Services Inc)
 Cypress Advocacy, LLC: The BUILD Coalition
 Da Vinci Group: Braeburn Pharmaceuticals
 Da Vinci Group: Corizon Health Services
 Dykema Gossett PLLC: National Education Foundation
 Epplin Strategic Planning: Small UAV Coalition Inc.
 Ernst & Young LLP (Washington Council Ernst & Young): Baxter Healthcare Corporation

 Etherton and Associates, Inc.: CSRA LLC (Formally Known As CSC Government Solutions LLC)
 Hall, Render, Killian, Heath & Lyman, P.C.: Baker Healthcare Consulting Inc.
 Hall, Render, Killian, Heath & Lyman, P.C.: Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
 Hall, Render, Killian, Heath & Lyman, P.C.: Norton Healthcare
 Harbinger Strategies, LLC: Capital Group
 Harbinger Strategies, LLC: Rock Creek Counsel On Behalf Of Association Of Clinical Research Organizations
 Harris, Wiltshire & Grannis LLP (f/k/a Wiltshire & Grannis LLP): Rivada Networks
 Hobart Hallaway & Quayle Ventures, LLC: EC Waste, LLC
 Hobart Hallaway & Quayle Ventures, LLC: Privoro LLC
 Holland & Knight LLP: Resolve Marine Group, Inc.
 Husch Blackwell, LLP: Edward Jones
 Husch Blackwell, LLP: West Corporation
 J M Burkman & Associates: Brightmind Labs Inc.
 J M Burkman & Associates: Hot Tech Industries
 J M Burkman & Associates: Mike Schafer
 Jefferson Business Consulting, LLC: Alana HealthCare, LLC
 Jim Saxton, LLC: Holtec International, Inc.
 Jim Saxton, LLC: Occupational Training Center of Burlington County, Inc
 Jones Walker, LLP: Basel III Coalition of Community Banks
 Jones Walker, LLP: DestinationRx, Inc.
 Jones Walker, LLP: Federal Home Loan Bank Of Boston
 Jones Walker, LLP: Federal Home Loan Bank Of Chicago
 Jones Walker, LLP: Franchise Management Advisory Council
 Jones Walker, LLP: HR Ratings de Mexico S A de C V
 Jones Walker, LLP: International Bank of Commerce
 Jones Walker, LLP: Marquette National Corporation
 Jones Walker, LLP: Texas Bankers Association
 K&L Gates LLP: Algenol, LLC
 K&L Gates LLP: Sperry Rail, Inc.
 Kadesh & Associates, LLC: GSG Inc.
 KCoe Isom, LLP: Stan Schlueter Consulting
 King & Spalding LLP: Alere, Inc.
 Lindbergh Counsel LLC: CAMBA
 Lindbergh Counsel LLC: Electronic Payments Coalition
 Lobbyit.com: Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
 Management & Government Resources: CommCX

McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Anjon Biologics, Inc.
 McGuireWoods Consulting (A Subsidiary of McGuireWoods LLP): Student Debt Reduction Coalition
 Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas, Inc.: Association of Psychology Postdoctoral & Internship Centers (APPIC)
 Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas, Inc.: Genworth Financial, Inc.
 Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas, Inc.: NRG Energy, Inc.
 Mercury: Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East
 Monument Policy Group, LLC: American Gaming Association
 Monument Policy Group, LLC: Bloom Energy
 Monument Policy Group, LLC: Digimarc
 Monument Policy Group, LLC: Sabre GLBL Inc
 Monument Policy Group, LLC: iUNU Inc.
 Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP: Melaleuca Inc.
 Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP: Starz Entertainment LLC
 Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP: U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform
 Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP: Uniti Group Inc "Fka" Southern Light
 MWW Group LLC: City of Miami Beach FL
 Nexa Strategies, LLC: Advocacy Group obo Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
 Nexa Strategies, LLC: Advocacy Group obo the University Of Central Florida
 North South Government Strategies f/k/a JDM
 Panuzio & Giordano: Loureiro Engineering Associates
 Panuzio & Giordano: P&C Fence Company
 Panuzio & Giordano: Port Security Services
 Panuzio & Giordano: Stanley M Seligson Properties
 Policy Integration Partners, LLC: Fund for a Better Future Inc.
 Public Strategies, LLC: Teva Pharmaceuticals [sic] USA
 Public Strategies Washington, Inc.: Newtek Business Services
 Raffaniello & Associates: New Federalism Fund
 RR&G, LLC: Federated Investors, Inc.
 Sorini, Samet & Associates, LLC: Dredging Contractors of America
 Sorini, Samet & Associates, LLC: Momentive Performance Materials Holdings LLC
 The Bennett Consulting Group: Select Engineering Services
 The Glover Park Group LLC: National Campaign
 The Glover Park Group LLC: Scripps Network LLC
 The Glover Park Group LLC: Visa, Inc
 The Ingram Group LLC: North America Outdoors, Inc. DBA America Outdoors Association
 The Leonard Group: Stratolaunch Systems Corporation
 The Majority Group, LLC: Electronic Software Association (ESA)
 The Russell Group, Inc.: Grocery Manufacturers Association
 The Washington Tax & Public Policy Group (formerly The Washington Tax Group): Intel Corporation
 Thorn Run Partners: Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc.
 Urban Swirski & Associates, LLC: S-3 Group
 Van Scoyoc Associates: Fabiani & Company (Roger Williams University)
 Van Scoyoc Associates: Martin County, Florida

Van Scoyoc Associates: Minoa Solutions
Van Scoyoc Associates: National Association of Community Health Centers
Van Scoyoc Associates: Sorenson Communications, Inc.
W Strategies, LLC: Actelion Pharmaceuticals US, Inc
W Strategies, LLC: Alexion Pharmaceuticals
Wexler | Walker, a unit of Hill+Knowlton Strategies, LLC: Cintas Corporation
William Ball: The Coca-Cola Company
Wynne Health Group: Cambia Health Solutions, Inc.
Wynne Health Group: Friday Health Plans of Colorado, Inc.
Wynne Health Group: Thorn Run Partners on behalf of Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc.

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2018/04/20/3-staffers-leaving-biotechnology-trade-group-265294>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 6/24/2017 2:20:39 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Starbucks: MATT MIKA out of hospital -- GOP HEALTH CARE bill in shambles as Trump begins to get involved -- PRO-TRUMP group looking to pressure Dean Heller -- WOODY JOHNSON spotted at Trump hotel -- PENCE huddles with Koch

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Starbucks
06/24/2017 10:16 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. GOOD NEWS -- MATT MIKA IS OUT OF THE HOSPITAL --

A note from his family: "Our family is pleased to report that Matt has been discharged from George Washington University Hospital. We are truly grateful for the compassionate, world-class care provided by the doctors, nurses and team at George Washington, and we will never forget and continue to be grateful for the heroism shown by the U.S. Capitol Police. We truly appreciate the prayers, words of encouragement and support from Matt's friends, family and people across the nation and the world. Matt's discharge is a welcome and important step. As he continues to recover we ask for your respect of our family's privacy. The family currently has no plans to do media interviews or provide further updates."

BAD NEWS FOR TRUMP -- Five Senate Republicans oppose the GOP health care bill. Sens. Dean Heller (Nev.), Ron Johnson (Wis.), Mike Lee (Utah), Ted Cruz (Texas) and Rand Paul (Ky.) have all come out against the package. It matters precious little at this point who else is against the bill because the math here is pretty simple. With Democrats uniformly opposed to the legislation, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell can only lose two votes. While Trump has started personally lobbying GOP senators, his ability to turn votes in the chamber is uncertain and untested. Still, no one should ever count McConnell out -- he's among the savviest leaders Capitol Hill has seen.

WHAT AMERICA IS SEEING THIS MORNING -- SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE:

"HEALTH BILL LOBBYING HEATS UP: Key GOP senator balks at current version; Trump, Democrats scramble to shore up allies before vote" <http://bit.ly/2t6o0bU>

...**DENVER POST:** "Fifth GOP senator opposes latest health bill: Nevada's Heller

worried by Medicaid cuts; Republican super PAC to attack him in ads"
<http://bit.ly/2tFmhHp> ...

... **HARTFORD COURANT**: "Senators Expect 'Titanic' Fight: Blumenthal, Murphy Blast 'Evil' Bill, GOP Secrecy" <http://bit.ly/2u0cRpi> ... **JANESVILLE GAZETTE**: "Medicaid faces hard times: Historic change possible with GOP health plans" <http://bit.ly/2sBNHzm>

STATEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT, FROM THE WHITE HOUSE --

@realdonaldtrump at 8:51 a.m.: "Democrats slam GOP healthcare proposal as Obamacare premiums & deductibles increase by over 100%. Remember keep your doctor, keep your plan?"

-- **GUESS WHAT**: Democrats were never going to vote to repeal Obamacare. The stalemate on health care is a GOP issue. If you talk to elected Republicans on the Hill, they pretty much all understand that they now own health care as a political issue.

THE HEADACHE MCCONNELL DOESN'T NEED -- "The surprising GOP holdout on the Senate's health bill," by Jen Haberkorn: "Ron Johnson stormed Washington in 2010 by railing against Obamacare, becoming one of the law's harshest and most persistent critics. Now, with the Senate on the brink of repealing the law, he's one of the surprise holdouts threatening to block the bill. The Wisconsin Republican says Senate leaders are rushing the vote before he and the public can analyze it and are not doing enough to actually bring down premiums. He joined with a trio of Senate conservatives on Thursday who say they're open to negotiation but can't support Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's bill as it is." <http://politi.co/2u0cOdd>

-- **FROM WAPO'S SEAN SULLIVAN, BOB COSTA AND KELSEY SNELL**: "As the vote-counting effort intensifies, Trump, who has said he supports the bill but it needs more 'negotiation,' is trying to build consensus both in public and behind the scenes. On Thursday, he called Sen. Ted Cruz (Tex.), one of the five GOP holdouts, to speak with him about his proposed changes, according to White House officials and a Trump ally with knowledge of the conversation." <http://wapo.st/2sMSh6>

AIR WARS -- "Pro-Trump group to target GOP Sen. Heller over health care bill," by Matt Nussbaum and Alex Isenstadt: "A pro-Trump outside group is launching an advertising blitz against Republican Sen. Dean Heller over his opposition to the health care repeal bill - a bold act of political retaliation against a member of the president's own party. Heller, a Nevada Republican, is up for re-election in 2018 and is seen as one of the most vulnerable incumbents up for reelection this cycle. The barrage, which will be orchestrated by America First Policies, a group run by many of President Donald Trump's top campaign advisers, is backed by more than a million dollars ... Digital ads [were] set to begin running on Friday, and television and radio spots are set to launch early next week." <http://politi.co/2t6bZDi>

-- **THIS IS STUNNING**. Heller is perhaps the most embattled Senate Republican in 2018. A group that VP Mike Pence raised money for is going after him. This is the kind

of thing that is going to have Senate Republicans wondering if the White House and its allies have any idea what they're doing.

-- @HillaryClinton: "Forget death panels. If Republicans pass this bill, they're the death party."

***** **A message from Starbucks:** One in eight Americans struggles to get enough to eat. Inspired by the commitment from our partners (employees), Starbucks is working with Feeding America to channel our unsold fresh food to feed the communities we serve. By 2020, as our FoodShare program grows, we'll donate 50 million meals each year: <http://sbux.co/2sBiWeM> *****

WHAT REX TILLERSON'S BEEN UP TO -- "Overruling diplomats, U.S. to drop Iraq, Myanmar from child soldiers' list," by Reuters' Jason Szep and Matt Spetalnick: "In a highly unusual intervention, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson plans to remove Iraq and Myanmar from a U.S. list of the world's worst offenders in the use of child soldiers, disregarding the recommendations of State Department experts and senior U.S. diplomats, U.S. officials said. The decision, confirmed by three U.S. officials, would break with longstanding protocol at the State Department over how to identify offending countries and could prompt accusations the Trump administration is prioritizing security and diplomatic interests ahead of human rights.

"Tillerson overruled his own staff's assessments on the use of child soldiers in both countries and rejected the recommendation of senior diplomats in Asia and the Middle East who wanted to keep Iraq and Myanmar on the list, said the officials, who have knowledge of the internal deliberations. Tillerson also rejected an internal State Department proposal to add Afghanistan to the list, the three U.S. officials said." <http://reut.rs/2rNvrAa>

BONUS FOGGY BOTTOM REPORT -- "Intelligence officials worry State Dept. going easy on Russian diplomats," by Ali Watkins: "Intelligence officials and lawmakers are concerned that the State Department is dragging its feet in implementing a crackdown on Russian diplomats' travel within the U.S., despite evidence that Moscow is using lax restrictions to conduct intelligence operations. The frustration comes amid bipartisan concern that the Trump administration is trying to slow down other congressional efforts to get tough on Russia. ... The Kremlin's U.S.-based diplomatic corps, according to several U.S. intelligence sources, has been known to skip notification rules and use the lax restrictions to roam around the country, likely engaging in surveillance activities." <http://politi.co/2tZl8cb>

-- **"State's Afghanistan-Pakistan envoy leaves, spurring confusion about U.S. diplomacy in region,"** by Nahal Toosi: "The State Department unit that deals with Afghanistan and Pakistan has lost its top official and its fate is uncertain, even as President Donald Trump weighs increasing U.S. military presence in the region. The development has spawned confusion inside and outside the State Department about the future of the section known as the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan

and Pakistan, or SRAP." <http://politi.co/2t5NmWF>

KOCH WATCH -- "Vice President Pence meets with billionaire Charles Koch," by USA Today's Fredreka Schouten in Colorado Springs: "Pence, who has longstanding ties to Koch's political and policy empire, met with the Kansas industrialist for about 50 minutes ... Friday's meeting included Marc Short, Trump's director of legislative affairs, and longtime Pence aide Marty Obst. Short is a former top official in the Koch network. Those accompanying Charles Koch included key Koch lieutenants Mark Holden and Brian Hooks, who oversee the network's activities, along with Tim Phillips, who runs the Kochs' grassroots arm, Americans for Prosperity. [James] Davis also attended." <https://usat.ly/2sMROXU>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "The other treaty on the chopping block," by Gregory Hellman and Bryan Bender: "A fierce debate is brewing inside the Trump administration over whether to withdraw from another international treaty - this one a cornerstone disarmament pact with Russia banning an entire class of nuclear missiles. ... Leading Republican hawks are pushing legislation to compel Trump to take steps to develop new missiles in response - the first steps to jettisoning what is known as the INF treaty, signed by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. ... But there are serious questions inside the Pentagon, State Department and the White House National Security Council - and loud warnings from the architects of the pact - about the consequences of such a move, which some say could spark a full-blown arms race." <http://politi.co/2t6mWET>

THE JUICE...

SPOTTED: Woody Johnson -- the newly nominated ambassador to the United Kingdom -- in the Franklin study at the Trump Hotel last night for the reception for Steven Mnuchin's wedding to Louise Linton (at 6:30 p.m. tonight at the Carnegie Mellon Auditorium). Mnuchin was wearing a dark suit and red tie.

-- **NEW YORK REP. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT (D-N.Y.)**, who is in his first term, filed a financial disclosure that lists two assets: a pension, and between \$5 million and \$25 million in cash in a checking account.

SPORTS BLINK -- "AP sources: Jeb Bush, Romney join forces to pursue Marlins," by Steven Wine: "Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush has switched sides in pursuit of the Miami Marlins, and he's trying to beat out former teammate Derek Jeter. Bush has joined forces with businessman Tagg Romney in a group trying to buy the Marlins ... Bush and Jeter, the 14-time New York Yankees All-Star shortstop, led rival groups earlier this year. They then joined forces, but Bush dropped out in May. Now they're rivals again, and Jeter is still exploring financing options." <http://apne.ws/2t2idmz>

CLICKER -- "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **15 keepers** <http://politi.co/2sA9sQ0>

Playbook Reads




PHOTO DU JOUR: Five-year-old Arabella Rose Kushner and friends play with the lectern in the James Brady Press Briefing Room following press secretary Sean Spicer's off-camera news conference at the White House on June 23. | Chip Somodevilla/Getty

DEPT. OF PREVIOUS LIVES -- N.Y. DAILY NEWS -- "Trump commerce secretary once flouted zoning laws and built a wall around his Southampton property," by James Fanelli: "President Trump isn't the only one in his administration who thinks a border wall can solve a problem. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross once built an illegal wall on the perimeter of his swanky Southampton estate to block the noise from the American Indian reservation across the street and the traffic along Montauk Highway. When the billionaire cabinet member was told he couldn't have the wall, he waged a three-year legal battle with the local zoning board of appeals that he ultimately lost. Ross installed the sound barrier after his infant grandson kept waking up from the procession of cars and trucks along the highway and from the parade of customers at the tax-free tobacco shops on Shinnecock Nation land." <http://nydn.us/2s7v8Qg>

THE BLURRING -- "The White House hires a Trump hotel executive to serve as chief usher," by WaPo's Krissah Thompson and Jonathan O'Connell: "Melania Trump on Friday named a senior manager at Washington's Trump International Hotel to serve as chief usher of the White House. Timothy Harleth, who worked for Mandarin Oriental hotels in D.C. and New York before joining one of the Trumps' flagship hotels last year, will take the crucial position overseeing the staff of housekeepers, butlers and others who work in the first family's living quarters and maintain the executive mansion. ... This spring, the Trumps pushed out Chief Usher Angella Reid, an Obama appointee who had also come from the world of luxury hotels. The White House gave no reason for her firing other than a desire for change." <http://wapo.st/2rN5NM2>

KNOWING CORRY BLISS -- "The GOP's one-man fire brigade: After four special election wins, Republicans are relying on the Congressional Leadership Fund's Corry Bliss to safeguard the House majority," by Eliana Johnson: "Bliss has proselytized relentlessly about the declining importance of television, which Trump used to great effect, and the rising importance of ground game, something Barack Obama and Democrats were quicker to exploit than their Republican counterparts. He was bitterly critical of what he regarded as the [RNC's] weak field program last year in Ohio, where he built an independent field operation on Portman's behalf - a move that ruffled feathers at the [RNC].

"The senator waltzed to victory, but Bliss clashed repeatedly with then-RNC chairman Reince Priebus and his chief of staff, Katie Walsh, over Portman's field program; and Priebus and Walsh later waved off Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan from hiring Bliss to run the [NRSC] and the [NRCC]. Sources close to Bliss and Priebus say they have a cordial relationship now." <http://politi.co/2t637gZ>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "California activist Tom Steyer adds health care to his brand," by Victoria Colliver in San Francisco: "California billionaire activist Tom Steyer made his name as an environmental activist, worked with Democratic groups to register a million new voters and redefined green politics with high-profile campaigns on climate change and clean energy. Now as he weighs a run for public office, he's adding health care - specifically drug prices - to his brand. ... The former hedge fund executive, 59, is backing a California effort to force drug manufacturers to give notice of price increases, a move Steyer sees as a first step to reining in drug costs and curbing the power of corporate interests." <http://politi.co/2s6S8yY>

CONNECTING THE DOTS -- NYT A1, "Maritime Mystery: Why a U.S. Destroyer Failed to Dodge a Cargo Ship," by Scott Shane: "There should have been lookouts on watch on the port, starboard and stern of the destroyer Fitzgerald - sailors scanning the horizon with binoculars and reporting by headsets to the destroyer's bridge. At 1:30 a.m. last Saturday, off the coast of Japan south of Tokyo, they could hardly have failed to see the 730-foot freighter ACX Crystal, stacked with more than 1,000 containers, as it closed in. Radar officers working both on the bridge and in the combat information center below it should have spotted the freighter's image on their screens, drawing steadily closer. ... But none of that happened. The Fitzgerald's routine cruise in good weather through familiar, if crowded, seas ended in the most lethal Navy accident in years. Seven sailors lost their lives." <http://nyti.ms/2sMJBTG>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** One in eight Americans struggles to get enough to eat. Inspired by the commitment from our partners (employees), Starbucks is working with Feeding America to channel our unsold fresh food to feed the communities we serve. By 2020, as our FoodShare program grows, we'll donate 50 million meals each year: <http://sbux.co/2sBiWeM> *****

FIRST PERSON - DAVID RANK in WaPo, "Why I resigned from the Foreign Service after 27 years": "When the administration decided to withdraw from the Paris agreement on climate change, however, I concluded that, as a parent, patriot and Christian, I could not in good conscience be involved in any way, no matter how small, with the implementation of that decision. ... I worry about the frequently politically motivated portrayal of those who work for the American people as members of some mythical elite, separate and suspicious. Such false characterizations drive talented Americans away from public service or discourage them from entering it in the first place." <http://wapo.st/2t5Wif5>

IN LANGLEY -- NYT A1, "C.I.A. Set Up Secret Back Channel With Syria to Try to Free U.S. Hostage," by Adam Goldman: "In the early days of the Trump administration, national security officials began exploring ways to free Austin Tice, an American journalist and a former Marine officer believed to be held by the Syrian government. ... [I]n early February, Mike Pompeo, the C.I.A. director, spoke on the phone with Ali Mamlouk, the head of Syria's National Security Bureau intelligence service, a man accused of human rights abuses during the country's civil war and slapped with sanctions by the United States. The call was the highest-level contact between the

governments in years. Though Mr. Pompeo's discussion with Mr. Mamlouk prompted further communications that renewed hope that Mr. Tice would be freed, the operation fizzled out after the Syrian government's nerve gas attack in rebel-held northern Syria in April and the American missile strike in response." <http://nyti.ms/2t6hK3Z>

DEEP DIVE -- "Why Grenfell Tower Burned: Regulators Put Cost Before Safety," by NYT's David D. Kirkpatrick, Danny Hakim and James Glanz: "The London police on Friday blamed flammable materials used in the facade for the spread of the blaze and said the investigation could bring charges of manslaughter. ... [I]nterviews with tenants, industry executives and fire safety engineers point to a gross failure of government oversight, a refusal to heed warnings from inside Britain and around the world and a drive by successive governments from both major political parties to free businesses from the burden of safety regulations. ... Builders in Britain were allowed to wrap residential apartment towers - perhaps several hundred of them - from top to bottom in highly flammable materials, a practice forbidden in the United States and many European countries. And companies did not hesitate to supply the British market." <http://nyti.ms/2s2auWs>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman, filing from Palm Beach, Florida:

--**"China's Mistress-Dispellers,"** by Jiayang Fan in the New Yorker: "'There are no enduring marriages,' [Ming Li] told me matter-of-factly. 'Only mistresses who haven't worked hard enough at tearing it apart.'" <http://bit.ly/2t4q2bO>

--**"How Accusing A Powerful Man of Rape Drove A College Student To Suicide,"** by BuzzFeed's Katie J.M. Baker: "When an Alabama college student told the police she was sexually assaulted, she did everything she thought she was supposed to do. She ended up killing herself." <http://bzfd.it/2t0rAmV>

--**"What Makes Us Happy?"** by Joshua Wolf Shenk in the June 2009 issue of The Atlantic: "Is there a formula-some mix of love, work, and psychological adaptation-for a good life? For 72 years, researchers at Harvard have been examining this question, following 268 men who entered college in the late 1930s through war, career, marriage and divorce, parenthood and grandparenthood, and old age." <http://theatl.in.tc/2sKRede> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"Shakespeare's Politics,"** by Robert Cooper in the American Interest: "We know little of his political opinions, but there's much we can learn of them from the recurrent themes of his works." <http://bit.ly/2szQRE1>

--**"Covering the Cops,"** by Calvin Trillin in the Feb 17, 1976 issue of The New Yorker - per Longform's description: "A profile of Edna Buchanan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning crime reporter for the Miami Herald during its heyday." <http://bit.ly/2tDzwIB>

--**"Can Jonathan Haidt Calm the Culture Wars?"** by Evan R. Goldstein in the

Chronicle of Higher Education - per ALDaily.com's description: "Haidt is famous for explaining how liberals and conservatives think. Now he's wagering that social psychology can calm the campus culture war." <http://bit.ly/2szUObR>

--**"A Declaration of Urban Independence,"** by Richard Florida in the July/Aug. issue of POLITICO Magazine: "Cities are under assault in the age of Donald Trump. It would be better for the country if they ran themselves instead." <http://politi.co/2sAhr gb>

--**"Fighting for the Immigrants of Little Pakistan,"** by The New Yorker's Jennifer Gonnerman: "The Brooklyn neighborhood persevered after 9/11. Can it survive in the age of Trump?" <http://bit.ly/2t0lovn>

--**"Trained to Kill: How Four Boy Soldiers Survived Boko Haram,"** by Sarah A. Topol in the N.Y. Times Magazine: "The four children, from a fishing village in Nigeria, were among thousands abducted by Boko Haram and trained as soldiers. They learned to survive, but only by forgetting who they were." <http://nyti.ms/2t4cRZ8>

--**"What's Wrong With the Democrats?"** by Franklin Foer in the July/Aug. issue of The Atlantic: "If the party cares about winning, it needs to learn how to appeal to the white working class." <http://theatlantic.com/2t4ancx>

--**"The Tamarind is Always Sour,"** by Keane Shum in Granta: "The business model was to get as many passengers to Malaysia alive as possible, but crews were not shy about shooting or beating people to maintain order. The murdered would be thrown overboard, along with the handful who perished from starvation or sickness. We think about twelve of every thousand passengers died at sea, almost all from abuse or deprivation." <http://bit.ly/2szMg4p>

--**"The Monster of Florence: A true crime story,"** by Douglas Preston in the July/Aug. 2006 issue of the Atlantic: "Between 1974 and 1985 seven couples were murdered while making love in parked cars in the hills of Florence. The case was never solved. There have been suicides, exhumations, poisonings, body parts sent by post, séances in graveyards, lawsuits, and prosecutorial vendettas." <http://theatlantic.com/2sKUFRe>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor last night at the Nats game (the Nats beat the Cincinnati Reds 6-5) ... Rep. Lois Frankel (D-Fla.) asking for (and taking) a selfie with Guardian reporter Ben Jacobs yesterday at the taxi line at West Palm Beach airport after finding out that he was the reporter body-slammed by her new colleague Greg Gianforte (R-Mont.) ... former Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) on a United Airline flight yesterday from DCA to ORD ... Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) yesterday at Spokane airport, coming in from a flight from ORD.

TRANSITIONS -- Samantha Greene is starting Monday as the comms director for Rep. Julia Brownley (D-Calif.); Greene most recently spent two years as communications director at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. ... **Sara Roberts** had her last day on Friday as digital director for the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. She's moving to New York to be digital marketing editor for the Peninsula Hotels.

ENGAGED! @sethmoulton: "My girlfriend of 2+ years, Liz Boardman, just said yes! So excited!!" Boardman is a senior client partner at Korn Ferry Sports. ***With pic of the couple on the Speaker's Balcony, where he proposed*** <http://bit.ly/2tXZPZt>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Alison Hawkins, VP of comms at the Financial Services Roundtable and a Capitol Hill, VA and Romney alum, and **David Hawkins**, a special agent at the VA, recently welcomed Hunter Hawkins. "He's now the little brother to Avery (3) and Evangeline (2) who haven't left their baby brother alone since he got home. He was 8 lb 8 oz, 20 1/2 in long." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2rYTGzC> ... <http://bit.ly/2tWxy5k> ... <http://bit.ly/2s0Lgrz>

-- **Sarah Martin Castro**, director of federal relations at the University of Washington, and **Andre Castro**, comms director for Rep. Bill Flores (R-Texas), on Friday welcomed Lorraine Lupita Castro in to the world. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2s6N1hW>

--**Amber Moon**, comms director for Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) and **Byron Mills**, who works at Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, this week welcomed Wesley Samuel Mills to the world. Amber writes in: "He weighed in at 7lbs, 11oz despite being a few weeks early. He's the best birthday gift I could ever ask for!" **Pic** <http://politi.co/2t4cEEB>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Jeremy Katz, deputy director of the National Economic Council and former Bush 43 Jewish liaison ... Robert D. Kaplan, CNAS senior fellow and senior adviser at Eurasia Group, turned 65 (hat tips: Jewish Insider) ... Bradley Engle of Purple Strategies and a Jindal alum (h/t Kyle Plotkin)

BIRTHDAYS: Ralph Reed, founder and chairman of the Faith & Freedom Coalition ... Washington Free Beacon editor Matt Continetti is 36 ... Roger Fisk, Obama advance alum, is 5-0 ... former NY Gov. George Pataki is 72 ... Ed Traz, Republican mail consultant ... Texas Tribune's Morgan Smith (hubby tip: Travis Considine, filing from Zanzibar on their honeymoon) ... Billionaire activist investor Nelson Peltz is 75 ... former Clinton Labor secretary Robert Reich is 71 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Gretchen Reiter, founder of Highline Strategies ... Kevin Goldman, former WSJ media reporter and CNBC spokesman, now senior director and head of global media practice at APCO ... Politico media booking maven Jonathan Yuan ... former Treasury COS Chris Weideman ... former Jeb 2016 research director Quentin Cantu ... Ronie Gazit ... Zach Seward, VP of product and executive editor of Quartz ... Anna Massoglia ... WSJ's Jennifer Maloney ... Mike Gula, a Republican fundraising consultant ... Jesse Stinebring, data scientist at Civis Analytics and Obama alum ... Heather Hurlburt of New America Foundation ...

Sara Shannon ... Kim Fenske ... Brett Rosner (h/t Oliver Darcy, filing from Palm Beach)

...

... **Omnika Thompson**, executive producer for "MSNBC Live with Katy Tur" (h/t Michael Weiss) ... Mike Gula, who runs the Gula Graham Group with Jon Graham (h/t Zack Roday) ... Benjamin Tomchik, director of public affairs at American Insurance Association ... Neal Becton ... Sara Shannon ... Melinda Arons (h/t Adrienne Elrod) ... Joanna Reagan (h/t Jon Haber) ... Kaitlyn Burton, who writes Politico's Day Ahead newsletter (h/t Peter King) ... Katherine Marie Kulik ... Thomas Doane Perry III ... Allie Bradford ... Tyler Kasperek Somes ... Abel Acuña ... Kathleen Hartnett ... Sarah Dale ... Bush 43 admin. alum Joe Bogosian, now CEO of Safran Vectronix in Boston ... Roger Roscoe ... SEIU alum Tyler Somes ... Ricki Peltzman, spending her day as she always does - dressing all of DC - from her Upstairs on 7th store!) ... Kelda Helen Roys (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Mindy Kaling is 38 ... Minka Kelly is 37 ... Solange Knowles is 3-0 (h/ts AP)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Los Angeles:

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt) ... Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisc.). Panel: Helene Cooper, Hallie Jackson, Mark Leibovich and George Will

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) ... Adam Entous ... Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) ... Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) ... Mark Bowden. Panel: Ben Domenech, Michael Duffy, Ed O'Keefe and Amy Walter

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**, guest-hosted by Dana Bash: HHS Secretary Tom Price ... Ohio Gov. John Kasich ... Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.). Panel: Amanda Carpenter, Rick Santorum, Rep. Andre Carson (D-Ind.) and Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Kellyanne Conway ... Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) ... Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.). Panel: Matthew Dowd, Lanhee Chen, Julie Pace and Neera Tanden

--**Fox News Sunday**: Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) ... Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) ... HHS Secretary Tom Price. Panel: Michael Needham, Jennifer Griffin, Josh Holmes and Bob Woodward

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Michael Bender, Margaret Talev, Karoun Demirjian and Manu Raju

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Eric Trump ... Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) ... Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) ... Alberto Gonzales. Panel: Ed Rollins and A.B. Stoddard

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Sean Spicer ... Shannon Pettypiece ... Mollie Hemingway ... Ray Suarez ... Ed Henry ... Sarah Lacy

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel ... Joseph Cirincione ... David Brooks

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: April Ryan, David Drucker and Michael D'Antonio ... Phil Donahue ... Sarah Kliff ... Masha Gessen

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: Mexican Institute for Competitiveness general director Juan Pardinas and Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center executive director Mario Patrón ... El Cenizo, Texas Mayor Raúl Reyes and Brownsville, Texas Mayor Tony Martinez ... Human Rights Program of the Universidad Iberoamericana coordinator Denise González and researcher Jorge Ruiz Reyes ... violinist and Venezuelan activist Wuilly Arteaga ... Mexican-American singer-songwriter Lila Downs

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: AT&T executive vice president for external & legislative affairs Robert Quinn, questioned by Reuters' David Shepardson ... **"Newsmakers"**: Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), questioned by The Wall Street Journal's Gordon Lubold and Defense News' Joe Gould ... **"Q&A"**: Robert Caro

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2omgw1D>): Author and The Atlantic national correspondent Mark Bowden.

***** **A message from Starbucks**: One in eight Americans struggles to get enough to eat. Inspired by the commitment from our partners (employees), Starbucks is working with Feeding America to channel our unsold fresh food to feed the communities we serve. By 2020, as our FoodShare program grows, we'll donate 50 million meals each year: <http://sbux.co/2sBiWeM> *****

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From: POLITICO Huddle
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Subject: POLITICO Huddle: ALL EYES ON WEST VIRGINIA SENATE PRIMARY -- GOP confident Haspel will be confirmed -- DRUG DISTRIBUTORS FACE LAWMAKERS -- McCain may not return to Senate

05/08/2018 08:05 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

BLANKENSHIP BULLISH -- Voters head to the polls for primaries in four states today, but all eyes will be on West Virginia, where national Republicans are hoping anybody but former imprisoned coal baron Don Blankenship will win. President Donald Trump intervened Monday, tweeting that Blankenship "can't win" against Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and encouraging voters to support either Rep. Evan Jenkins (R-W.Va.) or state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey in the three-man race. But Blankenship isn't convinced the president's input will mean much, telling reporters, "Yeah, we're gonna win."

"Senior Republicans are fretting that Blankenship, who spent a year behind bars after the 2010 explosion at his Upper Big Branch Mine that killed 29 workers, has vaulted into the lead heading into Tuesday's primary," Alex Isenstadt reports. "The national GOP has waged an all-out campaign to stop him from winning the nomination. They're convinced he would destroy the party's prospects of ousting Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin in November. And many Republicans say a Blankenship win would be yet another black eye for the party, which is still reeling from last year's loss in the Alabama special election." Much more: <https://politi.co/2FUXy6V>

Related: "Flake blames Trump for rise of Blankenship in West Virginia," from Bres: <https://politi.co/2K1tk4A>; and "Before the Blankenship-McConnell Feud, the Senator Aided the Mining Executive," via ProPublica's Alec MacGillis: <http://bit.ly/2jISXfs>

WHAT TO WATCH IN OTHER PRIMARIES -- The West Virginia Senate primary is today's marquee matchup, but there are also races in Indiana, North Carolina and Ohio -- "all of which are certain to define the political landscape," Steven Shepard, Elena Schneider and Daniel Strauss report. In Indiana, businessman Mike Braun is favored to prevail over Reps. Luke Messer (R-Ind.) and Todd Rokita (R-Ind.). Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Ohio) is likely to win the nomination to challenge Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), but a proxy battle has emerged in another Ohio election, pitting Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) against former Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-Ohio).

"Republican Reps. Robert Pittenger and Walter Jones [of North Carolina] face stiff primary challenges on Tuesday, though Republicans watching the races expect both to survive," they write. If Pittenger prevails, he'll face a serious challenge from Democrat Dan McCready, who's outraised him, in a district that's trended away from the GOP in the last year. "Democrats have been turning out at higher-than-usual rates in 2017 and 2018 so far, propelling them to victories in special elections in southwestern Pennsylvania and Alabama, as well as dozens of state legislative seats," they continue. "Turnout in Tuesday's primaries will provide yet another window into Democratic enthusiasm in a handful of House races that are expected to be

competitive in November." Seven things to watch tonight: <https://politi.co/2wj5Qg>

Related read: "GOP primaries gauge the anti-establishment fervor Trump helped unleash," via The Washington Post's Michael Scherer, David Weigel, John Wagner and Sean Sullivan: <https://wapo.st/2HVQ5u6>; "The U.S. Voting System Remains Vulnerable 6 Months Before Election Day. What Now?" from NPR's Miles Parks: <https://n.pr/2jFtofe>; and "Hack-Resistant Vote Machines Missing as States Gird for '18 Vote," by Bloomberg's Nafeesa Syeed: <https://bloom.bg/2wpfO92>

SENATE LEADERS CONFIDENT ON HASPEL CONFIRMATION -- White House officials and Senate GOP leaders are confident the chamber will confirm Gina Haspel to lead the CIA by the end of the month. Haspel, the agency's deputy director, will testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday. After nearly withdrawing her nomination last week, she met with three Democratic senators on Monday and will meet with Sens. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Ron Wyden (Ore.) today, according to Playbook. And the White House believes she'll have the backing of vulnerable Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), whom she met with Monday. Republicans are optimistic other red-state Democrats will join Manchin in supporting Haspel, who's opposed by Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.).

"Gina Haspel will be voted out of the Intelligence Committee on a bipartisan basis and she will be confirmed by the full Senate on a bipartisan basis," said Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. "Haspel will face tough questions, particularly from liberal Democrats, over her role in overseeing the use of harsh interrogation techniques such as waterboarding -- and the destruction of videotapes documenting them -- during the George W. Bush administration," Burgess and Elana report. "But the GOP is increasingly certain it can avoid a repeat of last month's Ronny Jackson debacle, when the Veterans Affairs nominee withdrew amid allegations of misconduct as White House physician." More: <https://politi.co/2Ilek4q>

Related: "Undercover to under scrutiny: Gina Haspel, nominee to head CIA, to face Senate grilling," by The Washington Post's Shane Harris: <https://wapo.st/2rnEzxt>; "Gina Haspel Has the Experience to Run the C.I.A., and That May Be Her Biggest Problem," from The New York Times' Peter Baker and Matthew Rosenberg: <https://nyti.ms/2KK5gUV> ; and "National security officials preparing contingency plans if Haspel's nomination fails," per CNN's Jenna McLaughlin: <https://cnn.it/2K3fYES>

GOOD MORNING! Thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill, on this Tuesday, May 8.

POLITICO Space is our new weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age. [Sign up today.](#)

MONDAY'S MOST CLICKED: The Washington Post's [report](#) on once-safe Republican incumbents who are struggling for survival in 2018 was the winner.

WHITE HOUSE SENDING PROPOSED CUTS TO CONGRESS TODAY -- The White

House will send Congress \$15 billion in proposed spending cuts from past unused funds today. The figure is a dramatic decrease from the \$60 billion once floated but a slight uptick from the \$11 billion reported last week. A second rescissions package to slash spending from the recently passed \$1.3 trillion omnibus could come weeks later. "Unlike regular spending bills, a presidential rescissions package is given fast-track authority in both chambers," Sarah Ferris and Kaitlyn Burton report. "That means the proposal is one of the rare spending-related bills that is able to bypass the 60-vote threshold in the Senate."

The package will pull \$7 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program, which covers roughly 9 million low-income children, and \$800 million from the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation and target 38 additional programs. "Whenever the president submits a rescissions request, that spending is frozen automatically for 45 legislative days, or until Congress formally rejects it," they note. "The GOP-dominated House is expected to easily clear the rescissions package, but even White House officials are less confident about its fate in the Senate." More: <https://politi.co/2I0gneM>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- POLITICO Playbook's Jake Sherman and Anna Palmer will sit down with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) at the Liaison Hotel at 8:30 a.m. ***Watch the livestream here:*** <https://politi.co/2HV3z9y>

President Donald Trump will host Senate Republicans in the White House's Roosevelt Room at 11:15 a.m.

DRUG DISTRIBUTORS FACE OFF WITH CONGRESS -- Five drug distribution companies will face the House Energy and Commerce Committee today in an opioid hearing that comes after the panel has spent the last year investigating the companies' role "as middlemen between drugmakers and the hospitals and pharmacies that dispensed millions of pills in towns that are now ravaged by the opioid epidemic," Theodoric Meyer reports. "Cities and counties across the country are suing the distributors, arguing they failed to report suspiciously large or frequent drug orders and otherwise allowed the crisis to spread." The lawyers are hoping the hearing will mirror the 1994 tobacco hearings, which helped shift public opinion against the industry.

"It took 20, 25 years for somebody to die" from using tobacco, said Mike Papantonio, one of the lawyers suing the drug distribution companies. "Right now, there's a real immediacy. People are dying every day." "Both sides agree that the legal battle is more significant to the drug distributors' business than the hearing," Meyer writes, "but the executives' answers before members of Congress will almost certainly be incorporated into the litigation." Much more: <https://politi.co/2I7fxc6>

Related read: "5 unintended consequences of addressing the opioid crisis," by Sarah Karlin-Smith and Brianna Ehley: <https://politi.co/2I6cm4G>

LAWMAKERS REVIVE PRISON REFORM BILL -- A bipartisan group of House lawmakers unveiled a new criminal justice bill Monday that the Judiciary Committee will vote on Wednesday. The new legislation follows the collapse of an earlier version just two weeks

ago. The bill's lead authors, Reps. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) and Doug Collins (R-Ga.), worked with Jared Kushner and others over recess to tweak the proposal. "The bill would authorize funding for training programs to help rehabilitate prisoners," Heather reports. "If approved by the Judiciary Committee, the bill could be on the House floor before the Memorial Day recess, according to several sources."

"But while Jeffries and Collins have been working to build a bipartisan coalition of support, key lawmakers including Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), top Democrat on the House Judiciary panel, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) remain potential obstacles," she writes. "As the lead Democrat on the panel, Nadler's opposition could be a significant stumbling block for the legislation, which might be the last major bipartisan effort on Capitol Hill before the midterm elections." More: <https://politi.co/2I4qV8y>

TRUMP EXPECTED TO PULL OUT OF IRAN DEAL -- European diplomats tell The New York Times they expect the president to withdraw the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal. Trump said he'll announce his decision at 2 p.m. today. "If the diplomats are correct, the announcement will be the most consequential national security decision of Mr. Trump's 15 months in office," David E. Sanger and Steven Erlanger report for The Times. Trump has long slammed the deal, but "for more than a year, he was reluctantly persuaded by advisers that it was better than any alternative, and that the United States had no Plan B if it was the first to breach the arrangements." Much more: <https://nyti.ms/2I4pebc>

MCCAIN'S SENATE DAYS DONE? -- Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) said he was told that Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) won't return to the Senate. McCain has been absent for months as he recovers from cancer treatment at home. "I hope he does" return, Hatch said. "I hope he can." A Hatch spokesman later said the senator "spoke out of turn about Senator McCain's status." "He's been pleased to hear reports that Senator McCain is in good spirits and hopes to see him back in Washington soon," the spokesman said. Hatch also said McCain should reconsider allowing the president to attend his funeral. More: <https://politi.co/2KK9X0Z>

REMEMBERING MICHAEL BEAVER -- Assistant Senate Parliamentarian Michael Beaver died last week. He was 39 and is survived by his wife, Gilda, and two sons, Bradley and Connor. "They are joined [in mourning] by his colleagues on the Senate staff in the Secretary's Office and the floor staff on both sides of the aisle and throughout our whole institution. So the Senate's prayers are with all of Michael's family and friends at this immensely difficult hour," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) added that Beaver "was a member of a small but crucial team of behind-the-scenes staffers. "Without him," Schumer said, "the Senate couldn't function." More: <http://bit.ly/2I2Nrih>

TRANSITIONS -- Blake Seitz started as a speechwriter for House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) on Monday. He was previously a speechwriter for Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah).

James Arnold is Sen. Tom Cotton's (R-Ark.) new press secretary. He previously served as deputy chief of staff and communications director for Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.).

ENGAGED -- Chad Rhoades, counsel to Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), on Sunday proposed to

Blair Ellis, deputy national press secretary for the RNC, on Roosevelt Island. "The native North Carolinians met while working at the State House for then-House Speaker Tillis." *Pic* <http://bit.ly/2K1BSZb>

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- The House gavels in at 10 a.m., with first votes expected between 1:15 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. and last votes expected between 4:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2EsSWEM> **The Senate** meets at 2:30 p.m. to resume consideration of judicial nominee Kurt Engelhardt.

AROUND THE HILL -- The U.S. Capitol Police will hold its annual memorial service honoring officers who have died in the line of duty at 9 a.m. in the CVC-Atrium.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) will hold a media availability immediately after the Republican Conference meeting at 10 a.m. in HC-8.

Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.) will hold an event on protecting SNAP at 10 a.m. in 234 Cannon.

The Congressional Skin Cancer Caucus will hold a skin cancer prevention health fair and screening beginning at 10:30 a.m. in 2168 Rayburn.

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) will hold his weekly pen and pad briefing at 11 a.m. in H-144.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Sens. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) will highlight the actions the president and congressional Republicans have taken on the American health care system, resulting in higher premiums for working families, at 11:15 a.m. in the Senate Radio/TV Gallery.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Reps. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), Judy Chu (D-Calif.), Cedric Richmond (D-La.) and Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.) will hold a news conference to discuss the Trump administration's decision to add a new question on citizenship to the census at 11:45 a.m. in HVC-215.

Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Reps. John Faso (R-N.Y.), Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) Brad Schneider (D-Ill.) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) and others will hold the Jewish American Heritage Month celebration to honor prominent Jews whose contributions to American society are deserving of recognition at 12 p.m. in 325 Russell.

Senate Republican and Democratic leaders will hold separate press conferences after their weekly policy lunches starting around 2 p.m. in the Ohio Clock Corridor.

Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Reps. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.), Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), John Larson (D-Conn.), Joe Courtney (D-Conn.), Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), Jim Himes (D-Conn.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.) and Robin Kelly (D-Ill.) and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) will

hold a news conference at the completion of the Sandy Hook bike ride with a message for more than 250,000 Americans in support of measures to reduce gun violence at 2 p.m. in the House Triangle.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen will testify before the Senate Appropriations Committee on the fiscal year 2019 funding request and budget justification for DHS at 2:30 p.m. in 192 Dirksen.

Sens. Chris Coons (D-Del.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Reps. Donald Norcross (D-N.J.) and David McKinley (R-W.Va.) will hold a discussion on addressing the skills gap in America through apprenticeships at 4 p.m. in 902 Hart.

MONDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- Bruce Mehlman was first to correctly guess that Thomas Brackett Reed is the former House speaker from the closest port city in the U.S. to Europe. He was born in Portland, Maine.

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- Who was the last Republican to hold the Senate seat currently held by Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.)? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: nmccaskill@politico.com.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 3/26/2018 8:04:07 PM
Subject: Afternoon Energy: Greens v. EPA — China's new oil play — Court approves PES' bankruptcy plan

By Garrett Ross | 03/26/2018 04:02 PM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff

GREENS V. EPA: Seven environmental groups today sued EPA over its January change to how major emitters like power plants are classified under the Clean Air Act, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The change, which was never open to public comment, could allow sources to drastically increase pollution, the groups say. EPA air chief Bill Wehrum in the January memo reversed the so-called once in, always in policy, meaning any source that initially qualified as a "major" source of pollution would always be subject to those tougher standards, even if their emissions dropped low enough to qualify for a category with less stringent requirements. The green groups are arguing that the change will mean an increase in emissions because thousands of power plants, refineries, smelters, paper mills and other sources of pollution will be able to reduce or turn off their pollution controls. EPA will now defend the change before the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. More from Alex here.

CHINA'S NEW OIL PLAY: Chatter that U.S. and Chinese officials may soon sit down to talk trade issues helped lift U.S. stocks today, but for the energy world, all the action was in Shanghai. That's where China launched its yuan-denominated crude oil futures market today — and with 21 million barrels changing hands, there appears to be a strong appetite. If it keeps up those volumes, China may succeed in establishing a third international oil benchmark, along with London's Brent and Cushing's WTI contracts. China is the world's second biggest oil consumer and the biggest importer, so creating its own market could give it more clout on the global market and erode the hold that the U.S. dollar has long had over oil markets.

In fact, one UBS asset manager said the new futures exchange would raise the profile of the yuan, and could even threaten the primacy of the U.S. dollar, though others warned that Beijing's tight control over its currency would ultimately limit the influence of the new oil futures market. The verdict for the new market will eventually be made in the physical trade of oil around the globe, and at least one deal was signed today: Sinopec's Unipet trading arm bought Middle East crude from a Western oil major, priced off the new contract.

Welcome to Afternoon Energy! I'm your host Garrett Ross. Send suggestions, news and tips to gross@politico.com, dbeavers@politico.com, mdaily@politico.com and njuliano@politico.com, and keep up with us on Twitter at @garrett_ross, @davidabeavers, @dailyml, @nickjuliano, @Morning_Energy and @POLITICOPro.

COURT APPROVES PES' BANKRUPTCY PLAN: A judge for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware approved a plan that will allow Philadelphia Energy Solutions Refining and Marketing to emerge from bankruptcy. The plan addresses concerns raised by the state of Pennsylvania, which is owed \$3.8 billion in back taxes, as well as the Department of

Justice's trustee, which had previously objected. The court must still sign off on a consent decree between PES and EPA to waive a big chunk of PES' compliance requirement under the Renewable Fuel Standard. Comments on the consent decree are due today.

The Renewable Fuels Association opposes the EPA deal that would let PES off the hook for those RFS obligations, and it echoed many of the objections raised by Growth Energy by saying the government should not let the company claim the RFS had pushed it into bankruptcy. "PES's position is meritless, and the government should not be misled into an unfavorable settlement by such false rhetoric," the association said in its [filing](#). The court will hold a hearing on the issue next week.

PENCE ON THE ROAD AGAIN: Vice President Mike Pence will be hitting the road again this week, continuing his tour with America First Policies, touting "Tax Cuts to Put America First" and participating in a reception for GOP Rep. [Kevin Cramer](#) in Fargo, N.D., the VP's office announced today. Additional details about the reception for Cramer were not provided in the press release. [Last Friday](#), Pence joined EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for a similar event with America First Policies in Atlanta, and Energy Secretary Rick Perry joined a roundtable discussion with the pro-Trump group back in November.

EPA PRESS RESTRICTIONS DRAW REBUKE: The National Association of Science Writers is complaining to EPA regarding "an unusual and restrictive press office episode" last week. In a letter dated March 23, the group's Information Access Committee pressed EPA Associate Administrator Liz Bowman to address complaints from several reporters, who requested information about Pruitt's plans to make the agency's science more transparent. Spokesman Jahan Wilcox did not respond to questions about Pruitt's plans to make agency science more transparent, and instead "circulated an article on this topic by the Daily Caller, a partisan publication, as a press release." The letter called on the agency to take steps to prevent the "unprofessional and unethical" behavior in the future. "When reporters contact the EPA Press Office asking for information regarding the activities of a taxpayer-funded organization, those queries should be answered swiftly by knowledgeable staff. The same holds when journalists request public documents from an agency." Read more [here](#).

AS THE RUMOR MILL TURNS: Remember [just this morning](#) when Perry was back on the radar as a contender to take over the Department of Veterans Affairs? Well, the White House sought to pump the brakes again today, saying President Donald Trump has confidence in VA Secretary David Shulkin, at least for the time being, POLITICO's Rebecca Morin reports. In an appearance on Fox News, deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said: "We all serve at the pleasure of the president. If he is not pleased, you'll know it. ... He is a secretary and he has done some great things at the VA. As you know, the president wants to put the right people in the right place at the right time and that could change." If you'll recall, at least twice in the past two weeks, Perry has reaffirmed that he is content in his post at DOE, once [responding to reporters](#) and another in [direct response](#) to Sen. [Maria Cantwell](#) at an Energy and Natural Resources hearing. But, he was spotted touring the Brooke Army Medical Center on Friday, adding fuel to the growing speculations. Read more [here](#).

QUICK HITS:

- Energy markets have gotten more volatile and harder to predict, [Axios](#).
- U.S. Mining Must Lead The Great Energy Transition, [Forbes](#).
- Ski resorts fight climate change with snow guns and buses, [Wired](#).
- Arctic Sea Ice Missed a Record Low This Winter. Barely. [The New York Times](#).

WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

- Trump expels Russian agents as [gap between words and actions](#) widens
- [Inside the collapse](#) of a bipartisan Obamacare deal
- How much is Rick Gates [telling Mueller](#) about Trump?

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Stories from POLITICO Pro

EPA drops 'once in, always in' policy from key Clean Air Act requirements [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 01/25/2018 06:11 PM EDT

EPA today withdrew a Clinton-era policy that was designed to prevent major emitters like power plants and factories from getting out of tough requirements to limit their toxic air emissions.

In a new [memo](#), EPA air chief Bill Wehrum wrote that the "once in, always in" policy "is contrary to the plain language" of the Clean Air Act. Wehrum revoked a [1995 guidance memo](#) outlining the policy and said EPA would consider new regulations to clarify its interpretation of the law.

Under the now-revoked guidance, any emitter that qualified as a "major" source of hazardous air pollutants would forever be subject to that tougher standard to comply with MACT rules, even if its emissions dropped low enough to be considered an "area" source subject to fewer or no requirements. Wehrum's memo said the law does not specify that such classifications are permanent.

"EPA has now determined that a major source which takes an enforceable limit on its [potential emissions] and takes measures to bring its HAP emissions below the applicable threshold becomes an area source, no matter when the source may choose to take measures to limit its" potential pollution emissions, Wehrum wrote.

Wehrum argued that the policy shift will actually encourage sources that hesitated to install

emission reduction projects to move forward. Environmentalists, however, quickly blasted the change on social media.

The Bush administration twice attempted to change the OIAI policy but never succeeded.

WHAT'S NEXT: Wehrum's memo says EPA will "soon publish a Federal Register notice to take comment on adding regulatory text that will reflect EPA's plain language reading of the statute."

To view online [click here](#).

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Greens sue EPA over 'once in, always in' policy reversal [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 03/26/2018 11:23 AM EDT

Seven environmental groups today sued EPA over its January change to how major emitters like power plants are classified under the Clean Air Act, a move they complain could let sources drastically increase pollution but that was never subject to public comment.

In his January memo, EPA air chief Bill Wehrum reversed the so-called once in, always in policy that meant any source that initially qualified as a "major" source of pollution would always be subject to those tougher standards, even if their emissions dropped low enough to qualify for a category with less stringent requirements.

EPA argued that the change would allow emitters to move forward with new projects that could actually reduce emissions.

In a statement, the green groups argued that thousands of power plants, refineries, smelters, paper mills and other sources of pollution will now be able to attenuate or turn off their pollution controls, increasing emissions.

"For decades, polluters have been able to meet this Clean Air Act requirement, and the administration's decision to grant them this toxic loophole is as heartless as it is reckless," said Mary Anne Hitt of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign.

A report released today by the Environmental Integrity Project, one of the groups suing EPA, looked at 12 Midwest plants and concluded that the change could let sources to quadruple their emissions of pollutants ranging from lead to benzene to acid gas.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will defend the change before the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

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Pruitt to join Pence at event for pro-Trump group [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/22/2018 12:05 PM EDT

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will join Vice President Mike Pence for an event with the pro-Trump outside group America First Policies tomorrow in Atlanta, the vice president's office announced.

The event is entitled "Tax Cuts to Put America First." Pence will then participate in a Georgia Republican Party event afterwards.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry headlined a roundtable discussion with the same group back in November.

Perry's appearance was billed as the first in a series of visits members of the president's Cabinet planned with America First Policies. While the Energy secretary did not solicit donations in his official capacity, which would violate federal law, America First officials planned to ask for contributions after he left, POLITICO [reported](#) at the time.

America First Policies and its affiliated super PAC, America First Action, plan to raise and spend \$100 million supporting Trump's agenda this year.

Additional details on the Atlanta event with Pence and Pruitt were not immediately available. America First Policies did not immediately respond to requests for comment. An EPA spokesman said agency ethics officials signed off on Pruitt's appearance because 501(c)(4) organizations like America First Policies are not considered partisan political groups for the purposes of the Hatch Act.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Atlanta event featuring Pence and Pruitt is [scheduled](#) to begin at 3:30 p.m. Friday.

To view online [click here](#).

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White House: Trump has confidence in Shulkin 'at this point in time' [Back](#)

By Rebecca Morin | 03/26/2018 09:26 AM EDT

President Donald Trump has confidence in David Shulkin "at this point in time" despite reports that the Veterans Affairs secretary may be fired as early as this week, White House deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said on Monday.

"We all serve at the pleasure of the president. If he is not pleased, you'll know it," Gidley said in an interview on Fox News. "At this point in time though, he does have confidence in Dr. Shulkin. He is a secretary and he has done some great things at the VA. As you know, the president wants to put the right people in the right place at the right time and that could change."

Shulkin has reportedly been viewed negatively after being accused of excessive spending on travel and for saying he has been given the blessing of the White House to purge VA staffers he accused of "subversion," though he's been given no such approval.

When pressed about reports on Monday that Trump would like to fire Shulkin but doesn't have a replacement, Gidley said, "When the president wants to make a change, he will make it."

"He doesn't have to try, he doesn't have to guess. He has the power to do so whether he has a replacement or not, he can still make a change," he said. "The president wants to put the best people around him to execute his policy."

White House deputy press secretary Raj Shah on Monday afternoon declined to discuss Shulkin's future, saying there will be "no personnel announcements" when he was asked about the secretary at the White House press briefing.

"I haven't asked the president about it today. I don't want to comment on it too specifically," Shah said.

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Trump expels Russian agents as gap between words and actions widens [Back](#)

By Louis Nelson and Michael Crowley | 03/26/2018 09:06 AM EDT

The Trump administration is expelling 60 Russian diplomatic officials it says are spies to punish a nerve agent attack in the United Kingdom that has been widely attributed to Moscow.

The dramatic move continues a two-faced U.S. policy toward Russia — further escalating official diplomatic tensions even as President Donald Trump continues a friendly approach toward Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In a phone call with Putin last week, Trump personally congratulated the Russian leader on his reelection but did not mention the attempted murder of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter with a banned nerve agent in the U.K. earlier this month.

Trump was involved "from the beginning" and "personally made" the call to take the steps announced Monday, which also include the shuttering of Russia's consulate in Seattle, according

to a senior administration official who briefed reporters. The official said Trump has not spoken to Putin since their phone call last Tuesday.

Yet as of early Monday afternoon, Trump had made no public comment nor tweeted about the latest action. Trump has been notably reluctant to criticize Putin directly, even amid federal probes into Russian election meddling and revelations about suspicious contacts between Trump campaign officials and Kremlin-connected Russians.

Trump drew wide criticism after he declined to ask Putin about the chemical attack, which the British government firmly blames on Russia. But the White House said Trump wants to find common ground with the Russian leader in the name of global security, including what Trump has called a new "arms race" with Russia, which recently unveiled several new nuclear weapons.

"The President still remains open to working with the Russians on areas of mutual concern," White House spokesman Raj Shah told reporters Monday, including counter terrorism. Shah said that Trump "will continue diplomacy with Russia and with Putin," though he added that "our relationship with Russia is frankly up to the Russian government and to Vladimir Putin."

While Trump said last week that he hopes to meet with Putin soon, Shah said he had "no announcements on any kind of a meeting."

In a video posted on Twitter, Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Antonov called the move a "grave mistake," saying that it runs "against the telephone conversation between our two presidents" last week, which he called "constructive."

"It is up to the United States to decide what kind of relations they want to have with the Russian Federation," added Antonov, who was called to the State Department on Monday morning to be informed of the expulsions.

In an angry statement Monday, Russia's foreign ministry denied any knowledge of the Skripal poisoning and vowed retaliation. The statement said the expulsions violate "the norms of civilized interstate dialogue and the principles of international law," warning: "[W]e will react to it."

At the same time, Monday's announcement drew praise even from some generally tough critics of Trump's outreach to Putin.

"When it comes to Russia we must continue to take strong action and today's announcement is a good start. I greatly appreciate President Trump for taking this decisive action," Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said in a statement.

"The administration has done the right thing in supporting our British allies," tweeted Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is leading an investigation into Russian election meddling and alleged collusion between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin.

The Trump official said all 60 of the expelled officials are operatives posing as diplomats, 48 at the Russian Embassy and 12 at the Russian mission to the United Nations. They and their families have seven days to leave the U.S.

Trump administration said it was acting in coordination with more than a dozen allies in Europe and beyond. Germany and France also announced Monday that they are expelling four Russian diplomats each, according to the German Press Agency and Reuters, while The Associated Press reported that Poland and Lithuania will also expel Russian diplomats. All told, European Council President Donald Tusk announced on Twitter that 14 European Union nations would expel Russian diplomats in response to the attempted murder.

"The Russian government has shown malicious contempt for the sovereignty and security of countries worldwide," an administration official said. "It has repeatedly sought to subvert and discredit Western institutions. These efforts are ongoing. Today, we stand in solidarity with America's closest ally, the United Kingdom. To the Russian government, we say when you attack our friends, you will face serious consequences."

While British Prime Minister Theresa May moved quickly to denounce Russia as the culprit behind the attempted murder of Skripal—a former Russian military official who became a spy for Britain—White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was initially hesitant to lay blame for the attack on the Kremlin.

The White House soon adopted the British government's position, although Trump's refusal to raise the attack during his phone call with Putin further fueled criticism that he has taken a soft stance toward Russia — especially relative to his get-tough approach elsewhere around the globe.

While the expulsion of the Russian diplomats and closure of the Seattle consulate were ordered in part as specific retaliation for the Kremlin's alleged involvement in Skripal's attempted murder, an official added that the steps were also part of "a holistic look at the Russian government's collection capabilities here in the U.S."

The expulsions, another official said, remove "a large number of the unacceptably numerous Russian intelligence officers who abide in the United States."

The Russian intelligence officers being expelled, one administration official on the conference call said, "are considered to be aggressive collection personnel here in the U.S."

The FBI has long been eager for the expulsion of what it believes are many dozens of Russians who, using diplomatic cover, have been gathering intelligence within the United States.

It is the second time within the past 12 months that the Trump administration has moved to close Russian diplomatic facilities, having ordered last August the shutdown of Russia's San Francisco consulate, as well as a chancery annex in Washington and a consular annex in New York. Monday's move leaves the Kremlin with just two consulates in the U.S., one in Houston and one in New York, in addition to its Washington embassy.

In December 2016, President Barack Obama expelled 35 Russian diplomats and imposed other sanctions on Russia as punishment for the Kremlin's election meddling. Trump's then-incoming national security adviser, Michael Flynn, reportedly urged Russia's ambassador to the U.S. against retaliation — implying that Trump would reverse the sanctions after his inauguration.

"In taking this step, we assessed the Russian consulate in Seattle to be part of this broader problem of an unacceptably number of Russian intelligence operatives in the United States," an administration official on Monday morning's call said. "We think it sends a very clear signal, particularly since on the West Coast, the Russians will now have a degraded capability with regards to spying on our citizens."

Daniel Lippman contributed to this report.

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How much is Rick Gates telling Mueller about Trump? [Back](#)

By Darren Samuelsohn | 03/26/2018 05:00 AM EDT

When Rick Gates struck a plea deal last month with special counsel Robert Mueller, the 45-year-old former Trump campaign official likely avoided decades behind bars and salvaged a chance to watch his children grow up.

The question is what Gates offered Mueller in return. Though it is a virtual given that Gates will sell out his business partner and Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, less understood is the direct threat Gates could pose to President Donald Trump.

That's the conclusion of several lawyers involved in the Russia case and more than 15 current and former Trump aides and associates interviewed by POLITICO to determine how much danger Gates' guilty plea could pose to the president and his inner circle, and how alarmed they might be by his testimony.

While Gates now wears a GPS monitor around his ankle, in 2016 he wore a Secret Service lapel pin that gave him easy access to Trump on the campaign trail and at Trump Tower.

"He saw everything," said a Republican consultant who worked with Gates during the campaign. The consultant called Gates one of the "top five" insiders whom Mueller could have tapped as a cooperative government witness. One defense attorney in the case said Gates' plea has triggered palpable alarm in Trump world.

Manafort may have struck a larger public profile, but Gates spent more time in Trump's orbit. Manafort left the Trump campaign under a cloud of scandal in mid-August 2016. Gates, his right-

hand man, stayed on through the election before assisting the Trump inauguration and Trump's early presidency.

Worst of all for the White House, Gates lacks hard-wired loyalty. He is not family, like Trump's oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., or his son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Nor is he among true Trump believers like Corey Lewandowski and Brad Parscale.

"Let's be honest, Don Jr. is not ratting out his dad. Gates is different," said Paul Rosenzweig, who served as a senior counsel to Whitewater independent counsel Ken Starr.

Gates' senior campaign role alongside Manafort, who has longtime ties to Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs, might give the special counsel's team insight into whether the Trump campaign colluded with the Kremlin. And his proximity to Trump early last year could make him privy to White House conversations of interest to Mueller, possibly including discussions of Trump's May 2017 firing of FBI Director James Comey.

John Dowd, the Trump personal attorney who stepped down last week, brushed aside questions about Gates' plea, which will likely limit his sentence to a maximum of six years. "Draw your own conclusions. I'm not concerned," he told POLITICO in an interview before his resignation.

A defense attorney working on the Russia case said the reality is different. Trump aides and associates are concerned that Gates' cooperation will greatly increase Manafort's legal jeopardy — adding pressure on the 68-year-old Manafort to flip against Trump and other senior campaign aides, such as Kushner. A federal judge recently said Manafort faces the prospect of spending the rest of his life in prison.

Trump aides and associates understand that Mueller is sure to ask Gates not just about Manafort but also about his interactions with Trump, his family members and his 2016 campaign team.

"They've been very concerned about it," said the defense attorney. "It's something they're worried about."

Mueller obtained indictments against Manafort and Gates last October on 12 counts related to their lobbying work on behalf of a pro-Russia political party in Ukraine and its former leader, Viktor Yanukovich. Both men pleaded not guilty to the charges, which included money laundering, tax evasion and operating as unregistered foreign agents.

Gates abandoned Manafort in late February after a federal grand jury added more new charges to the case related to bank and tax fraud, with Gates pleading guilty to two felony charges. The move had devastating implications for Manafort, with whom Gates collaborated to illegally launder large payments for the work in Ukraine, according to Mueller. Legal experts expect Gates will provide Mueller with more details about the payments and how they were concealed, which could add additional years to Manafort's sentence if he is convicted.

Friends say the decision to turn on a friend and partner of so many years must have been painful, but that Gates likely concluded it was his only chance to have a future outside of prison.

"He still has a life ahead of him if he does it this way," said Charlie Black, a Republican lobbyist who hired Gates in the mid-2000s.

Gates met Manafort nearly 30 years ago as an intern at the lobbying firm Manafort co-founded with Black and GOP operative Roger Stone. They reconnected as partners in 2006 and maintained a lucrative roster of foreign clients over the next decade before linking up with Trump through Stone and Tom Barrack, a wealthy real estate executive close to both Manafort and Trump. Gates and Manafort joined Trump's campaign in late March 2016.

Manafort rose quickly and became the campaign's chairman, and Gates his deputy. Based at Trump Tower in New York, they ran many of the campaign's core functions, oversaw Trump's selection of Mike Pence as his running mate and helped orchestrate Trump's wider election strategy.

Gates would have been privy to a wide range of Manafort's activities, potentially including the now-famous June 2016 Trump Tower meeting Manafort attended — along with Kushner and Trump Jr. — with a Russian lawyer who promised dirt on Hillary Clinton.

Gates and Manafort also emailed in May 2016 about Trump campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopolous' efforts to arrange a meeting between Trump and Russian officials. While the emails appear to show Manafort and Gates dismissing that idea, many other questions remain about Papadopoulos — including whether he informed any campaign officials about the fact that he had been told about hacked Democratic emails in Russia's possession.

Manafort was ousted as campaign chairman in mid-August 2016 after The New York Times published a story describing a secret ledger he kept for his lobbying work in the Ukraine on behalf of pro-Russian politicians. But Gates, whose name never commanded headlines, stayed on the Trump campaign despite also working on the account.

A larger shakeup downgraded Gates' role on the campaign, and he left New York for its Alexandria, Virginia-based offices, where he became a liaison to the Republican National Committee. Former colleagues said Gates wasn't fired along with Manafort because he was competent and experienced — qualities in short supply on the Trump campaign. ("Rick gets shit done," a person close to the campaign told POLITICO at the time.)

Before a September 2016 debate on Long Island, Gates was seen talking with casino mogul Sheldon Adelson and Michael Flynn, according to The New York Times. Gates was also spotted back at Trump Tower in the days before the election.

After the election, Barrack hired Gates to run day-to-day operations for Trump's Presidential Inaugural Committee; he helped raise more than \$100 million.

A growing cloud around his and Manafort's work in Ukraine didn't keep Gates away from Trump's White House, either. Gates helped organize a nonprofit group, America First Policies, to boost the new administration's agenda. The Washington Post also reported that he had visited the

White House in March to discuss the group's efforts with Trump officials. But Gates was ousted later that month after new details emerged about work he and Manafort had done for a Russian oligarch with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Barrack soon hired Gates as a political adviser. Given Barrack's close relationship with Trump, the job kept Gates in the president's immediate circle. Multiple sources confirmed a June 2017 Daily Beast report that Gates was seen on several occasions at the White House when Barrack was visiting with Trump.

During an October briefing on the day Mueller indicted Manafort and Gates, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders acknowledged Gates' visits but downplayed his access, telling reporters he had attended "meetings here at the White House, but nothing directly with the president."

Gates was also fired by Barrack after the October indictment. Through a representative, Barrack declined to comment. Gates' attorney, Thomas Green, also declined to comment.

Manafort himself issued a stinging statement in response to Gates' plea last month.

"Notwithstanding that Rick Gates pled today, I continue to maintain my innocence," he said. "I had hoped and expected my business colleague would have had the strength to continue the battle to prove our innocence. For reasons yet to surface he chose to do otherwise. This does not alter my commitment to defend myself against the untrue piled up charges contained in the indictments against me."

Several former colleagues disputed the idea that Gates poses a grave danger to Trump.

"I don't think Rick has anything that'd incriminate the president, or anybody else in the family, in the campaign," said Black, who said he thought the plea deal was mainly "about Manafort."

But veteran law enforcement experts said Mueller would grant Gates leniency on his prison sentence only in return for his unrestricted testimony about subjects going well beyond his work with Manafort.

"He's their bitch," said Solomon Wisenberg, a former Starr deputy.

Gates is already enjoying some benefits from his cooperation. He is free on \$5 million bail and living at his home in Richmond, and was recently granted permission to take a spring break trip with his family to Boston — though he rearranged the trip over security concerns. (In a court filing, his lawyer cited an online comment that warned: "Bring a food taster.")

Mueller recently approved a request by Gates' lawyers to remove the GPS tracking device he's worn since October to prevent him from fleeing. But a federal judge denied the request, noting that Gates' plea had "turned the prospect that he could be sentenced by a court into a certainty that he will." She also noted that "[h]is change of heart is quite recent."

The judge did give Gates a green light to travel without advance permission from Richmond to Washington "for meetings or activities at the request of the Office of Special Counsel or the Federal Bureau of Investigation" — an indication that Gates is already making visits to Mueller's team to share his recollections.

John Dean, the former Richard Nixon White House counsel who flipped in 1973 to become a star prosecution witness against the Republican president, said he's not surprised to see Mueller's team giving Gates deferential treatment.

"I think he can fill in an awful lot of blanks," Dean said.

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From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com
Sent: Tue 11/7/2017 5:24:26 PM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Hi guys, wondering if there was any movement on those numbers?

Also, since this will be a cover story, it seems like I should only ask again if Mr. Pruitt can talk to us. Phone, in person, whatever.

On Thu, Nov 2, 2017 at 3:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We will get a number tomorrow for you.

On Nov 2, 2017, at 6:19 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

I am not trying to be a pest, but can someone please answer my inquiries?

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 5:42 PM, Alexander Nazaryan
<a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Hi, I don't think my question was especially difficult: given that Admin. Pruitt has explicitly said he would like to lighten regulatory burden, can you please quantify how he has done so?

I'd also asked about how many Regional hqs he has visited. No answer to that, either.

I'm sure you're all very busy, but he is a public official, running a public agency. I believe the people deserve answers.

Thank you.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 12:57 PM Alexander Nazaryan
<alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the

implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan
<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation.

‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example.

‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public

health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On**
Behalf Of Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

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--

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Wed 4/25/2018 12:04:43 PM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle, presented by the Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice: GOP SNAGS AZ SPECIAL ELECTION -- VA nominee fights on -- CBC WANTS MORE SPOTS IN DEM LEADERSHIP -- WV Senate candidate lives much farther west

04/25/2018 08:00 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

REPUBLICANS HOLD ON TO ARIZONA SEAT -- Republican Debbie Lesko won Tuesday's special congressional election in Arizona, successfully fending off Democrat Hiral Tipirneni in a district President Donald Trump won by 21 points in 2016. National Republicans had poured more than \$1 million into the race, hoping to avoid a repeat after losing a conservative Pennsylvania House and Alabama Senate seat in recent special elections. "But Lesko's single-digit margin is the latest evidence that Republicans face a punishing midterm environment, even in Trump-friendly territory," Elena Schneider reports. Lesko led 53 percent to Tipirneni's 47 percent when The Associated Press called the race.

Lesko will replace former Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), who resigned in December following sexual misconduct allegations. "GOP outside groups -- including the [RNC], the [NRCC] and the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC aligned with House Speaker Paul Ryan -- dumped resources on the district to boost early turnout and cement the party's latent advantage in the district," she adds. "National Democrats, meanwhile, largely stayed on the sidelines. The [DCCC] didn't spend on TV ads in the race, though the [DNC] invested \$175,000 in the district through online fundraising, get-out-the-vote efforts and other infrastructure. The independent-expenditure unit of the Working Families Party also spent \$100,000 to help Tipirneni." More: <https://politi.co/2qXHNqs>

TWEET DU JOUR: Cook Political Report's Dave Wasserman (@Redistrict): "There are 147 GOP-held House seats less Republican than #AZ08. It's time to start rethinking how many of those are truly safe in November."

Related: "Republicans Lost Support in Every Special Election Since Trump Became President," by The New York Times' Alexander Burns and Denise Lu: <https://nyti.ms/2FfY4Mu>; and "Texas Gov. Greg Abbott schedules June 30 special election to fill U.S. Rep. Blake Farenthold's seat," from the Texas Tribune's Patrick Svitek: <http://bit.ly/2HQTAS0>

BESIEGED VA NOMINEE PRESSES ON -- VA secretary nominee Ronny Jackson was supposed to testify before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee today. Instead, the hearing is indefinitely delayed as the White House physician fights to overcome unsubstantiated allegations of misconduct, such as drinking on the job and over-prescribing pills. "The episode offers a window into how the president's impulsive decision-making has created problems for GOP senators as well as his own aides," Burgess, Eliana Johnson and Elana report. Trump quickly announced his intent to nominate Jackson -- without fully vetting him -- after firing David Shulkin. He sent mixed signals Tuesday about whether Jackson should withdraw.

"In a private meeting with Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kansas), Jackson said the allegations are false and that he wants a hearing to make his case," they write. "At the same time, Trump was telling reporters that he 'personally' didn't think Jackson should fight on but it was 'totally' Jackson's decision." Inside the White House, aides have been leaking negative information about advisers, Cabinet members and Cabinet nominees, hoping to "shape the president's personnel decisions -- or torpedo them entirely -- through the news media. A handful of White House insiders speculated that such a leaking campaign was afoot against Jackson, whose nomination rattled West Wing advisers and was opposed by nearly every senior White House staffer." Why the nomination was practically doomed from the start: <https://politi.co/2HsVtkj>

Related reads: "The White House mounts full defense of Ronny Jackson, Trump's VA nominee," by Andrew Restuccia, Matthew Nussbaum and Burgess: <https://politi.co/2HrzsSM>; "VA nominee drunkenly banged on female employee's door during overseas trip, sources say," from CNN's Juana Summers and Manu Raju: <https://cnn.it/2r11FZF>; and "VA Nominee Accused Of Drinking On Duty, Improper Prescriptions, Sen. Tester Says," via NPR's Kelsey Snell, Susan Davis and Scott Neuman: <https://n.pr/2Kb9LrD>

BLACK CAUCUS WANTS MORE BLACK LEADERS IN NEXT CONGRESS -- With only one African-American lawmaker in the Democratic Caucus' top six leadership positions, members of the Congressional Black Caucus are eyeing more representation in the next Congress. "Many [CBC members] said they see a Democratic takeover of the House, which looks increasingly likely, as their best chance to make it happen," Heather and I report. "The behind-the-scenes jockeying is part of widespread shadowboxing in the Democratic Caucus as members -- long frustrated by the lack of opportunities for advancement because of the leadership blockade -- look for ways to grow their influence after the election."

Assistant Minority Leader James Clyburn (D-S.C.) is said to be considering a run for majority leader if Democrats win back the House, a move black lawmakers hope would open up a spot for another CBC member to join the top tier of leadership. House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Democratic Caucus Chairman Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) both want the speakership if Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) retires. Many black lawmakers say privately that Clyburn could exit with Pelosi if it's assured a CBC member will succeed him.

CBC Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.) is also considering a run for majority leader, in the off chance that the party regains the House but the top three leaders are forced out due to a desire for generational change in leadership. Several black lawmakers are anxious to move up but have nowhere to go. "In many ways, the frustration over stifled ambition within the CBC is a microcosm of the deep-seated issues that have long plagued the Democratic Caucus," we write. "The bottleneck at the top has created a raft of younger members with few opportunities to move up." Much more: <https://politi.co/2vLQda0>

**** A message from the Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice:** The Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice urges Congress to support the FTC's update to the Contact Lens Rule and protect the rights of America's 41 million contacts wearers. Optometrists too often fail to provide prescriptions following eye exams, denying consumers the ability to shop around for

their contact lenses. <https://keepcontactlenschoice.org> **

HAPPY WEDNESDAY! Thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill, on this April 25.

POLITICO Space is our new weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age. [Sign up today](#).

CEO CONVERSATION -- Join POLITICO CEO Patrick Steel for a conversation with Steve Ballmer, former Microsoft CEO and founder of USAFacts, to talk data transparency, disruption in civic and business leadership, and the government's impact on society. [RSVP](#) for the CEO conversation -- 4/26 at the Newseum -- Doors open 11:30 a.m.

TUESDAY'S MOST CLICKED: CBS News' [report](#) detailing allegations against VA secretary nominee Ronny Jackson was the winner.

GRASSLEY PITCHES AMENDMENT TO MUELLER-PROTECTION BILL -- Under a draft amendment from Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) to a bipartisan bill to protect special counsel Robert Mueller from termination, DOJ would have to report to Congress "any change made to the specific nature or scope" of the Mueller probe. "Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee are in talks on the draft amendment, [which] could change before the panel's vote Thursday on the special counsel legislation," Elana reports. "But residual tension between Grassley and the committee's top Democrat, California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, remains a risk heading into Thursday's vote."

"Feinstein has warned against any attempt to dilute the bill or constrain Mueller, and support from the minority party will be critical to getting the legislation to the Senate floor," she continues. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), however, has said the bill won't see the floor. More: <https://politi.co/2HWIZlQ>

Related Russia read: "U.S. senators push banks for information on Russian 'oligarchs,'" by Reuters' Patricia Zengerle: <https://reut.rs/2HpqWrq>

LAWMAKERS NEAR DEAL ON PRISON REFORM PLAN -- The House Judiciary Committee is nearing an agreement on a bipartisan prison reform bill that could be approved as soon as today and reach the floor early next month. "The legislation, which would establish training programs aimed at reducing recidivism rates, is the product of months of negotiation between Reps. Doug Collins (R-Ga.), Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), President Donald Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner and Attorney General Jeff Sessions," Heather reports. While negotiators are still haggling over the final language, Jeffries said so-called "poison pills" have been removed. "The legislation could face stiff winds in the Senate, however, where Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has pushed a broader criminal justice bill that includes both prison and sentencing reform." More: <https://politi.co/2FcNqG9>

SENATE CONFIRMS NSA, CYBER COMMAND CHIEF -- The Senate quietly confirmed Lt. Gen. Paul Nakasone as the leader of the NSA and U.S. Cyber Command. He was

unanimously confirmed via voice vote. "Nakasone, who possesses a deep background in digital warfare, will also receive a fourth star, a new requirement to lead Cyber Command after [the] Trump administration decided last year to place the unit on par with long-standing military outfits like Central Command," Martin Matishak reports. More: <https://politi.co/2HuwelO>

REPUBLICANS PLAY BALL -- GOP lawmakers are holding their first practice this morning for this year's congressional baseball game. House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) and others were shot at a practice last summer, but Capitol Police have beefed up security for this year's practices and game. "That's a departure from previous years, where often the only security presence at the lawmakers' early morning practices consisted of leadership members' Capitol Police security details," Roll Call's Griffin Connolly reports. "If no party leaders showed up, that meant no armed protection for the rest of the team during practice." Much more: <http://bit.ly/2HrpCEI>

Related: "Steve Scalise will deliver LSU, LSU Law commencement addresses," via The Times-Picayune's Wilborn P. Nobles III: <http://bit.ly/2Kcuvz7>

WEST VIRGINIA SENATE CANDIDATE LIVES IN NEVADA -- What happens near Vegas doesn't stay near Vegas when you're running for Senate in West Virginia. Republican Don Blankenship's "primary residence is a \$2.4 million villa with palm trees and an infinity pool near Las Vegas," The New York Times' Trip Gabriel and Stephanie Saul report. Blankenship also owns a residence in West Virginia and has expressed interest in gaining Chinese citizenship despite running an America-first-style campaign.

"No Republican candidate in the 2018 midterms embodies so many contradictions as pointedly as Mr. Blankenship, who was found guilty of conspiracy to violate mine safety standards in federal court and yet has plenty of supporters in coal country," they write. "He is one of three leading Republican contenders heading into the May 8 West Virginia primary, even though he is lugging around enough political baggage to disqualify a candidate most anywhere else." Much more: <https://nyti.ms/2Htip2O>

IRREPARABLY DAMAGED? -- Former Senate leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) says the Senate is "irreparably damaged" and predicts the chamber will deteriorate into the less bipartisan House. He declined to attack Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) directly but called Republicans the "limpest waffle you've ever seen," adding that they've done "everything they can" to hurt the judiciary and legislative branches of government. "With the Republicans, I'm not mad, I'm just terribly disappointed in what they've done to the institution," he said. "I believe the federal government has been so harmed, the legislative branch has been decimated, judicial decimated, checks and balances sliding out the door. Our democracy will survive but it's going to be tough." More: <https://nbcnews.to/2JsayTx>

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- **The House** gavels in at 9 a.m. but will recess immediately and reconvene around 10:30 a.m. for French President Emmanuel Macron's address to a joint session of Congress. First votes are expected between 1:15 p.m. and 2:15 p.m., and last votes are expected between 3:45 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2EsSWEM> **The Senate** meets at noon to resume consideration of secretary of state nominee Mike Pompeo.

AROUND THE HILL -- Rep. Lois Frankel (D-Fla.) and others will hold an Enough is Enough Summit to discuss strategies and craft initiatives to combat sexual violence at 9 a.m. in the CVC-Auditorium.

French President Emmanuel Macron will deliver an address to a **joint session of Congress** at 10:30 a.m. in the House Chamber.

Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.) will host the eighth annual Minnesota Congressional Delegation Hotdish Competition with **Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.)** and **Reps. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), Tim Walz (D-Minn.), Rick Nolan (D-Minn.), Erik Paulsen (R-Minn.), Tom Emmer (R-Minn.), Jason Lewis (R-Minn.)** and others at 11:30 a.m. in 430 Dirksen.

Reps. Tom MacArthur (R-N.J.) and **John Delaney (D-Md.)** will hold a roundtable with impact investors at 12 p.m. in 1732 Longworth.

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) will hold his weekly pen and pad briefing at 1 p.m. in H-144.

House Democratic Caucus Chairman Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) and **Vice Chairwoman Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.)** will hold their weekly media availability at 2 p.m. in HVC-Studio A.

Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.) will hold a news conference with Flint residents, activists and artists to mark the fourth anniversary of the Flint water crisis at 2 p.m. in 421 Cannon.

Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-Ill.) will hold a discussion on the security of public transit systems with representatives from the TSA surface transportation division, WMATA and Chicago Metra transit police departments, and transportation sector of the E.U. delegation to the U.S. at 2 p.m. in CVC-Meeting Room South.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and others will hold a conference call briefing on legislation requiring the State Department to monitor and report on whether countries are meeting commitments to help Holocaust survivors identify and reclaim their rightful property beginning at 2 p.m. The call-in number is 888-419-5570 (the international call-in number is 617-896-9871), and the passcode is 347 119 97.

Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and **Chris Murphy (D-Conn.)** will hold a conference call briefing to announce the introduction of two bills to provide aid and relief to Connecticut homeowners with crumbling foundations beginning at 2:15 p.m. RSVP to Elizabeth_Benton@blumenthal.senate.gov for call-in information.

Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), Tom Garrett (R-Va.) and **Juan Vargas (D-Calif.)** and others will hold a briefing on the impact on groups facing religious persecution at 2:30 p.m. in 2168 Rayburn.

Reps. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.) and **Al Green (D-Texas)** will hold a news conference with

Planned Parenthood to discuss efforts for health care programs at 3 p.m. in the House Triangle.

Sens. Chris Coons (D-Del.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator Vishal Amin will hold a briefing on challenges and trends in the sports industry at 4 p.m. in 902 Hart.

TUESDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- No one correctly guessed two married couples who ran for Congress in the same state in the same year. Bill Paxon and Susan Molinari both ran successful campaigns and represented New York districts in Congress in the 1990s; Carroll and Carol Hubbard both lost their 1992 campaigns in Kentucky.

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- From Patricia Bieze: This Democrat interned for a Republican senator whose seat he now holds. Who are the two senators, and what state do they represent? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: nmccaskill@politico.com.

GET HUDDLE [emailed to your phone](#) each morning.

**** A message from the Coalition for Contact Lens Consumer Choice:** Medical research shows no connection between eye health and where contact lenses are purchased. Yet, optometrists and lens manufacturers continue to claim there are health risks from purchasing lenses online or from warehouse stores. These false claims conceal their true motivation - allowing optometrists to profit from selling more lenses and keeping prices high for manufacturers. www.KeepContactLensChoice.org **

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/04/25/gop-snags-az-special-election-va-nominee-fights-on-cbc-wants-more-spots-in-dem-leadership-wv-senate-candidate-lives-much-farther-west-265986>

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 9/6/2017 10:36:49 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise: CONGRESS COULD EXTEND debt limit until midterms -- DACA: Trump wants something done, but will act if Congress does nothing, and Congress doesn't know what to do -- SPOTTED: McCARTHY at Oceanaire

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

VLADIMIR PUTIN ON NORTH KOREA, via CNN's Hilary Whiteman: "A day after predicting 'global catastrophe' if North Korea's nuclear tests lead to anything other than talks, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the situation may be 'impossible' to resolve.

"Putin made the comments after meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia. Moon had his own stark message about the situation on the Korean Peninsula: 'If North Korea's provocation doesn't stop here, I think could fall into an uncontrollable situation.'"

<http://cnn.it/2vL6E66>

-- AP at 2:53 a.m.: "MOSCOW (AP) - Russian President Vladimir Putin calls for talks with North Korea, says sanctions are not a solution."

Happy Wednesday. REPUBLICAN LEADERS were at the White House yesterday to talk about tax reform. The administration -- represented by President Donald Trump, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn -- told Hill GOP leaders that they hoped tax reform wasn't swallowed by Congress's new priority: aid for hurricanes slamming the southern portion of the United States. Mnuchin had another message: the billions of dollars needed for Harvey aid will impact the debt-limit expiration date, and he said it was important that Congress lift the nation's borrowing limit this week.

WHICH TAKES US TO THIS IMPORTANT STORY, by Rachael Bade, Josh Dawsey and Kyle Cheney: "President Donald Trump's White House will move Wednesday to quash growing GOP opposition to a strategy to raise the debt ceiling as part of a

Hurricane Harvey relief package, according to multiple House and White House officials.

"Administration officials will inform lawmakers that they will not be able to pay FEMA disaster claims for victims without a simultaneous increase of the debt ceiling, the sources said. House lawmakers are also being told by GOP leaders that Trump will give a full-throated endorsement to their plan to pair the two bills and send them to the Oval Office this week -- without a penny worth of spending cuts long demanded by conservatives and even Republican leadership allies." <http://politi.co/2eEFPp6>

THE MOST RECENT PLAN -- CLEAR THE DEBT LIMIT UNTIL AFTER THE MIDTERMS -- The Senate plans to amend the Harvey relief bill with a debt-limit increase that will last through the end of 2018. Why? Most lawmakers would rather not have to vote to lift the debt limit more than once this Congress. There is talk of also attaching a continuing resolution, which would keep government open, but aides and lawmakers we spoke to say they do not think they'll have enough time to get it ready this week.

-- **THE OPPOSITION:** The House Freedom Caucus, the conservative group led by Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, voted to support a debt-ceiling increase if it's tied to capping spending as a percentage of GDP.

BROADLY SPEAKING -- It's going to be tough to stop this package. The Senate is going to tie the two bills together, and the House doesn't have the leverage or ability to decouple them -- especially with the White House supporting the Hill leaders' strategy.

A SATURDAY SESSION in the Capitol is possible -- we dare say likely -- this week.

THE BUZZ IN THE CAPITOL yesterday -- Washington is going to be very quickly consumed with what could be a protracted battle over disaster spending. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott already said that the federal government will need to spend north of \$100 billion in his state. And if Hurricane Irma is as bad as predicted, that will also cost a pile of cash. **TODAY:** The House will approve \$8 billion in disaster aid. **IN THE FUTURE:** At some point in the coming months, Republicans might tire of spending hundreds of billions of dollars on disaster relief and begin to push for spending cuts.

-- **IF YOU'VE WATCHED** Congress for the last seven years, what gives you hope that it can complete the following list in the next six months: pass a budget, complete tax reform, fund government, pass hundreds of billions in disaster aid, reauthorize the FAA and CHIP and complete immigration reform?

-- **A COMPLETELY PLAUSIBLE REALITY:** The Republican Congress goes into the midterm elections codifying DACA in some form, spending hundreds of billions of dollars on disaster relief and failing to pass tax reform and repeal Obamacare.

-- **JUST ASKING:** If Democrats really want to force Republicans' hands on DACA, why don't they refuse to fund the government, or raise the debt ceiling unless immigration

reform legislation is attached? **SENATE MINORITY LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER** and **HOUSE MINORITY LEADER NANCY PELOSI** are holding a 10 a.m. joint presser on DACA and Dreamers.

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** How are Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers helping create the future in science, medicine and national security? Learn more: hpe.com/supercomputing *****

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- TRUMP speaks to Chinese President Xi Jinping at 9 a.m. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) go to the White House for a meeting with the president at 11 a.m. Trump leaves for North Dakota at noon, accompanied by Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) and Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.). Trump arrives back in D.C. at 8 p.m.

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "ST. JOHN'S, Antigua (AP) - The most powerful Atlantic Ocean hurricane in recorded history makes first landfall in Caribbean islands."

-- WAPO'S CAPITAL WEATHER GANG'S BRIAN MCNOLDY and JASON SAMENOW: "Hurricane Irma is an 'extremely dangerous' Category 5, barreling toward the northern Lesser Antilles and Southern Florida. It's already the strongest hurricane ever recorded outside the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, and it's likely to make landfall somewhere in Florida over the weekend. If it does, the impact could be catastrophic.

"This is a life-threatening storm for the United States, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and the southeastern Bahamas. Hurricane warnings have been issued for the northern Leeward Islands, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and the Turks and Caicos. A hurricane watch covers Haiti and the southeastern Bahamas. With maximum winds of 185 mph, Irma is tied for the second strongest storm ever observed in the Atlantic. ...

"All of Florida -- especially South Florida and the Keys -- should be preparing for a major hurricane landfall on Sunday. Tropical-storm-force winds are expected to arrive as soon as early Saturday. ... If Irma makes landfall as a Category 4 or higher in the United States, joining Hurricane Harvey, it will become the first time two storms so strong struck the United States in the same season." <http://wapo.st/2wFnli7>

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: Voters split whether Trump has done enough for Harvey relief," by Steven Shepard: "Voters are divided on whether President Donald Trump is doing enough to help Texas and Louisiana recover from Hurricane Harvey, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll released as parts of the nation gird for another large, powerful storm. Forty-three percent of voters say Trump is doing enough in terms of disaster relief for Harvey - only slightly more than the 40 percent who say Trump isn't doing enough. Seventeen percent have no opinion.

"Partisanship affects opinions of Trump's performance: Only 21 percent of self-identified Democrats say Trump is doing enough, while 73 percent of Republicans say he is doing enough. Trump's overall job-approval rating has ticked up, from 40 percent last week to 43 percent now. But a 52 percent majority disapprove of the job Trump is doing as president." <http://politi.co/2gKM277>

WHERE THINGS STAND ON DACA ...

THE BIG PICTURE -- "Trump and Republicans face 'a defining moment' on immigration," by WaPo's Bob Costa and Phil Rucker: "President Trump is hurtling toward a crossroads on immigration -- his signature campaign issue and a key source of his law-and-order reputation -- where each path before him comes with significant political risks. Trump has temporarily placed the fates of roughly 800,000 undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children in the hands of Congress, buying himself time and shunting responsibility.

"Should Congress act, the president will have to choose whether to sign on to a legislative solution granting the 'dreamers' legal status - or to let the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA, expire, which would impede the ability of beneficiaries to find work and leave them vulnerable to deportation. The choice cuts to the core of his presidency and could have long-term ramifications for the Republican Party. ...

"Trump's hard-line base, which demands purity and expects results, recoils at DACA as illegal amnesty and will look to him to veto any such legislation. But allies said Trump also is eager to prove that he has the "great heart" he has touted, and he is under pressure from his party's establishment, the business community and many of his own advisers to find a way to let dreamers stay." <http://wapo.st/2f2ydNS>

-- **"Capitol Hill clueless on Dreamers fix,"** by Seung Min Kim, Rachael Bade and Heather Caygle: "House Republican leaders ... are privately hoping to push the immigration battle until at least this winter. They, like the White House, want a down payment on Trump's border wall with Mexico in exchange for codifying the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals -- though House Democrats won't say whether they'd accept tougher immigration restrictions in order to save the program. ... The White House signaled that Trump would not be willing to sign a bill that solely deals with DACA.

"We can't just have one tweak to the system,' press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Tuesday. Another senior administration official said the White House is hoping to win concessions on the border wall, more immigration enforcement agents or new restrictions to legal immigration. The Domestic Policy Council, which reports to White House immigration hard-liner Stephen Miller, plans to outline immigration policy goals and send them to Capitol Hill Republicans to guide negotiations." <http://politi.co/2w4Kg2B>

-- **"Dreamers fear deportations from DACA data,"** by Ted Hesson: "The Department of Homeland Security said Tuesday it won't give immigration enforcement agencies the personal data it holds on participants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program - for now. But DHS made it clear that deportation agencies could someday get access to the detailed files it holds on 800,000 people who gave it personal information - past residential addresses, travel history, bank statements, fingerprints - so they could live and work legally in the U.S. ... [T]here's a growing fear as the Trump administration prepares to end DACA that this information may be used to track them down and deport them. 'People will be absolutely in terror from now on,' said Leon Rodriguez, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under former President Barack Obama, 'because nobody knows what's next.'" <http://politi.co/2gEu5DE>

-- **CNN'S TAL KOPAN and JIM ACOSTA:** "White House talking points on Tuesday urged DACA recipients to prepare for a 'departure from the United States,' a much starker possible future than Trump administration officials used in public when announcing an end to the program.

"The statement was contained in a background document that was sent by the White House to offices on Capitol Hill, obtained by CNN from multiple sources. In the 'DACA talking points' memo, the White House laid out a number of bullet points for supporters on Tuesday's announcement outlining the administration's action. One bullet point suggests DACA participants should prepare to leave the country. 'The Department of Homeland Security urges DACA recipients to use the time remaining on their work authorizations to prepare for and arrange their departure from the United States -- including proactively seeking travel documentation -- or to apply for other immigration benefits for which they may be eligible,' the memo says." <http://cnn.it/2gL1nVk>

-- **THE TICK TOCK:** "Trump's traveled from fiery to conflicted on dreamers," by AP's Jonathan Lemire and Jill Colvin: <http://bit.ly/2xa47m5>

THIS IS NOT HELPFUL -- @realDonaldTrump: "Congress now has 6 months to legalize DACA (something the Obama Administration was unable to do). If they can't, I will revisit this issue!"

-- **WHY? CONGRESS** rarely acts unless forced to. Trump saying the six-month deadline isn't really a deadline at all and that he could still intervene won't help pressure lawmakers to get something done sooner rather than later.

WHAT THE HILL IS WAITING FOR -- Some guidance on what exactly President Trump wants to sign.

FIRST PERSON - "Why I'm Resigning From Trump's Diversity Coalition," by Javier Palomarez in the NYT: "Many actions taken by this White House have profoundly rattled my confidence in its commitment to inclusivity and its respect for diversity. But today's decision was worst of all. An American president who does not believe there's a place for young people whose passion and values exemplify the best of our tradition is simply

not a president that I can continue to support. That is why, as the president and chief executive of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, I have chosen to resign from the President's National Diversity Coalition, effective immediately."

<http://nyti.ms/2gJungk>

THIS IS IMPORTANT -- MICROSOFT'S BRAD SMITH, the company's president and chief legal officer, tweeted last night the company "will pay for legal counsel for Dreamer employees in any deportation case and file a brief in the company's name." Microsoft already came out saying Congress should make protecting Dreamers a top priority -- even ahead of tax reform. <http://bit.ly/2j0NV07>

TRUMP'S PRIORITIES -- "Trump still pushing for a 15 percent corporate rate," by Ben White and Nancy Cook: "President Donald Trump is increasingly fixated on slashing the top corporate tax rate to 15 percent - a level that pretty much no one else working on the issue in the White House or Congress thinks is workable. In a White House meeting on Tuesday, Trump again expressed his strong desire to hit the 15 percent target, from today's 35 percent. 'You can't get to 15 percent and anyone who has a back of an envelope can make that calculation,' said a senior official working on tax reform. 'And he may not like that truth, but it's the truth. It's just math.'"

<http://politi.co/2xNg0M4>

-- **"Trump wants one last Senate push on Obamacare repeal,"** by Burgess Everett and Josh Dawsey: "The president and White House staff have continued to work with Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) over the summer on their proposal to block grant federal health care funding to the states. And though the bill is being rewritten and Congress faces a brutal September agenda, Trump and his allies on health care are making a last-gasp push. ... Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) would need to find room on the packed calendar this month to hold another uncertain push to repeal Obamacare on party lines." <http://politi.co/2vK5mbk>

-- **THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE** the Senate will take up an Obamacare repeal vote. McConnell has moved on. Senate Republicans, for the most part, have too.

SCOOP -- "Senate resolution to force Trump's hand on condemning Charlottesville hate groups," by Seung Min Kim: "The Senate is preparing to force President Donald Trump to go on record to officially condemn the deadly white supremacist rallies in Charlottesville last month. Virginia Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, both Democrats, along with Republican Sens. Cory Gardner of Colorado and Johnny Isakson of Georgia, plan to formally roll out a Senate resolution later Wednesday that forcefully condemns the violence in Charlottesville while 'rejecting white nationalists, white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis and other hate groups.'

"The Senate routinely takes up nonbinding measures commemorating people and institutions in the form of concurrent resolutions and simple resolutions - which are both purely symbolic and not submitted to the White House for the president's signature. But backers of the Charlottesville resolution have strategically chosen to introduce their

measure as a joint resolution, which means it will be sent to Trump to sign into law."
<http://politi.co/2gKBR2k>

THE JUICE ...

-- **DAILY BEAST: "The Insane Gifts Saudi Arabia Gave President Trump:** The gifts range from the regal ('Artwork featuring picture of President Trump') to the martial (multiple swords, daggers, leather ammo holders), to the baroque (cheetah fur robes)."
<http://thebea.st/2eEy0zD>

-- **SPOTTED: HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER KEVIN MCCARTHY** (R-Calif.) dining with a group of House Republicans at Oceanaire Tuesday night. Lawmakers included Kevin Yoder (Kan.), Karen Handel (Ga.), Andy Barr (Ky.), David Rouzer (N.C.) and Kevin Cramer (N.D.).

-- **COREY LEWANDOWSKI** has been named a visiting fellow at the Harvard Institute of Politics. Other fellows include former Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, conservative writers Mary Katharine Ham and Guy Benson, and media consultant Joe Slade White.
<http://bit.ly/2vJBqML>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Protesters supporting DACA take to the streets in Washington D.C. on Sept. 5, following a Trump administration announcement that the Obama-era program will be rescinded. | M. Scott Mahaskey/POLITICO

BIG STORY -- "A Funeral of 2 Friends: C.I.A. Deaths Rise in Secret Afghan War: The number of C.I.A. deaths in Afghanistan rivals those killed in the Southeast Asia conflicts of nearly a half-century ago," by NYT's Adam Goldman and Matt Rosenberg: "On a sweltering day earlier this summer, operatives with the Central Intelligence Agency gathered at Arlington National Cemetery to bury two of their own. Brian Ray Hoke and Nathaniel Patrick Delemarre, elite gunslingers who worked for the C.I.A.'s paramilitary force, were laid to rest after a firefight with Islamic State militants near Jalalabad in Afghanistan, close to the border with Pakistan.

"There had been scant mention of Mr. Hoke's death in local news reports in Leesburg, Va., his home, and nothing at all about Mr. Delemarre in news accounts in the Florida Panhandle, where his family lives. Their deaths this past October were never acknowledged by the C.I.A., beyond two memorial stars chiseled in a marble wall at the agency's headquarters in Langley, Va.

"Today there are at least 18 stars on that wall representing the number of C.I.A.

personnel killed in Afghanistan - a tally that has not been previously reported, and one that rivals the number of C.I.A. operatives killed in the wars in Vietnam and Laos nearly a half century ago. The deaths are a reflection of the heavy price the agency has paid in a secret, nearly 16-year-old war, where thousands of C.I.A. operatives have served since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The deaths of Mr. Hoke, 42, and Mr. Delemarre, 47, show how the C.I.A. continues to move from traditional espionage to the front lines, and underscore the pressure the agency faces now that President Trump has pledged to keep the United States in Afghanistan with no end in sight." <http://nyti.ms/2eKbYzr>

THE OPPOSITION -- "Democrats launch super PAC to win back statehouses," by Gabe Debenedetti: "Democrats ... [are] trying to turn the tide with the launch of a new super PAC. Aiming to play a similar role as Senate Majority PAC does for Senate races and House Majority PAC does for House races, Forward Majority is launching this week as a vehicle for winning back state legislatures ahead of the next round of redistricting in 2021. Led by a group of Barack Obama campaign alums and veterans of Democratic politics and the business world, the organization is kicking off with a \$1 million prototype effort to play in races for Virginia's House of Delegates this year. It's aiming to raise up to \$100 million to win back legislative bodies in 12 states over the next four years." <http://politi.co/2eJA5On>

SCOTUS WATCH -- "Bipartisan swath of lawmakers files Supreme Court briefs against gerrymandering," by Isaac Dove: "Arnold Schwarzenegger's push for nonpartisan redistricting gained significant Republican support on Tuesday, with Ohio Gov. John Kasich signing on to his amicus brief at the Supreme Court and Arizona Sen. John McCain filing a separate friend-of-the-court brief. Then 36 current and former members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, filed yet another amicus brief that includes the chairman of the Freedom Caucus and the former chairman of the Progressive Caucus.

"The court is scheduled to hear a case in October, Gill v. Whitford, that could abolish partisan gerrymandering. Schwarzenegger, the former California governor, has made gathering support for it a priority. He spent last week calling members of Congress and governors directly, urging them to sign on. Kasich tweeted on Tuesday evening: 'Gerrymandering erodes democracy. 'We the people...' still needs to mean something. Unfortunately, gerrymandering restricts voters' ability to keep our leaders in check.'" <http://politi.co/2f16jS7>

STARTING TODAY -- "Menendez corruption trial: What you need to know," by John Bresnahan: "A federal courtroom in Newark, New Jersey, on Wednesday morning will feature a rare sight - a U.S. senator facing felony charges. The legal saga of Robert Menendez - a lengthy, leak-filled criminal probe followed by two-plus years of legal wrangling since his indictment while Menendez kept his seat - has huge implications for the Senate and New Jersey politics. If Menendez is convicted, there will be battles over who will replace the 63-year-old Democrat, in both the state and, potentially, the Senate. In a 52-48 Senate controlled by Republicans, every vote is immensely valuable." <http://politi.co/2eKf7zh>

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** A nation's strength is increasingly measured by its technical prowess. As the designer and builder of more supercomputers than any other company in the world, Hewlett Packard Enterprise is proud to lead the way in one of the future's most important technologies. Visit hpe.com/supercomputing to learn more about how Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers are helping create the future in science, medicine and national security.

WHAT J.D. VANCE IS READING - "How to save the Rust Belt: The region's economic struggles are a result of a decline in startups. Here's a way to fix it," by Seth London and Brad Tusk in Politico's Agenda: "The upshot is that both parties have a political imperative to aid the Rust Belt, but neither has the capacity to solve the biggest economic problem in the region: a decade long decline in startup activity. Startups are the sinew of the American economy but the uncomfortably reality is that American businesses are dying. Despite all the money and attention focused on Silicon Valley, far more businesses have gone belly up than started up over the past decade. And where we do see new businesses creation, it's far too concentrated on the coasts."
<http://politi.co/2gJQrHr>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- NEW YORKER FESTIVAL - Oct. 6-8 -- "This year's one-on-one interviews include: The trans-rights activist and former U.S. intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in conversation with The New Yorker's Larissa MacFarquhar. ... The former U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York Preet Bharara in conversation with The New Yorker's Jeffrey Toobin. ... The Chinese contemporary artist and activist Ai Weiwei in conversation with The New Yorker's Evan Osnos. ... The comedian, actor, and television host Seth Meyers in conversation with The New Yorker's Ariel Levy. ... Senator Al Franken in conversation with The New Yorker's David Remnick." ***Tickets go on sale on Friday at noon*** <http://bit.ly/2f0ZfoC>

MEDIAWATCH -- "At CNN, Retracted Story Leaves an Elite Reporting Team Bruised," by NYT's Sydney Ember and Mike Grynbaum: "In interviews with The New York Times, more than half a dozen CNN staff members, including three with direct knowledge of the investigative unit's operations, provided previously unreported details about the publication of the story and the fallout from its retraction. ... [T]he investigative team has been reshaped and redirected. Its members were told they should not report on perhaps the most compelling political story of the year: potential ties between the Trump administration and Russia. That subject is now largely handled by CNN's reporting team in Washington. ... The remaining team members have resumed publishing, but with a narrower reporting scope; they now focus on topics less glamorous than Mr. Trump's potential ties to Russia, like the opioid crisis and the environment." <http://nyti.ms/2f0OGSs>

--"Bianna Golodryga Joins CBS And CNN In An Unusual Deal," by Yashar Ali in HuffPost: "In a first-of-its-kind arrangement, Golodryga, who previously served as a business anchor for Yahoo News and the anchor of ABC's weekend edition of 'Good

Morning America,' will be working for CBS News and CNN simultaneously. She signed multiyear deals with both networks late last week. ... What makes Golodryga's deal unusual is that she could work for both networks each day, contributing reports to CBS shows and serving as an on-air contributor on CNN shows like 'The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer.'" <http://bit.ly/2eEVWmx>

--**BEN SCHRECKINGER**, currently a staff writer for POLITICO Magazine, has been named a GQ correspondent and will report and on national politics and the Trump administration from Washington. He'll also develop a video series produced by Conde Nast Entertainment.

--**PER MORNING MEDIA**: "Here's The New York Times' new congressional team: Jonathan Weisman will be congressional editor. Sheryl Stolberg will be the team lead. Yamiche Alcindor will be joining the team after a stint covering HUD. Nicholas Fandos joins the team after covering the VA, Secret Service and other stories. Thomas Kaplan will, well, stay where he is."

--**AMANDA TERKEL** has been named HuffPost's new D.C. bureau chief. She joined the site in 2010 and had been senior political reporter and politics managing editor.

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Madeline Albright at a cozy corner table at Centrolina ... Sarah Huckabee Sanders last night on a very delayed Delta shuttle from Reagan to LaGuardia ... Jen Palmieri and her husband Jim last night at Oriole Park in Baltimore where they stayed till 1 a.m. to watch Manny Machado hit a walk-off two-run homer in the Orioles; 6-5 victory against the Yankees.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- JEN PSAKI has been named the new VP for comms and strategy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She was the White House comms director for President Obama and was U.S. State Department spokesperson under Secretary of State John Kerry.

K STREET MOVE -- STEPHEN RADEMAKER has joined Covington's public policy and government affairs practice in Washington. Rademaker, who was most recently at the Podesta Group, also is an alum of the Bush W.H. and State Department.

TRANSITIONS -- Randal Meyer, most recently legislative counsel for Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), has left to join the appellate and major motions practice at Baker & Hostetler, LLP. ... **Melissa Ryan**, an Obama 2012 alum, has launched the Factual Democracy Project to bring "together experts that span tech, media, national security and civil society groups to explain how to fight back against efforts that use fake news -- propaganda, disinformation and misinformation to disrupt our elections and our democracy." ... Dezenhall Resources has hired **Erica Munkwitz** as a senior counselor.

She most recently was a professorial lecturer in modern British and European history at AU. ...

... **Maddy Weast** has started as press secretary for Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.). She most recently spent two years writing and working with the social media team at the Washington Free Beacon. ... **Danielle Varallo** on Monday started as the comms director for Republican Main Street Partnership. She most recently worked for UnitedHealth Group's external affairs team. ... **Ed Kim** has joined Rep. Michael Burgess' (R-Texas) team as senior health policy adviser. He is an alum of the offices of former Reps. Vern Buchanan (R-Fla.) and Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.). ... The Consumer Technology Association has hired **Jennifer Taylor** to be its VP of U.S. jobs.

SPOTTED at a Reuters reception at the National Press Club last night to celebrate Jeff Mason's year as president of the White House Correspondents' Association: Steve Thomma, Steve Adler, Kevin Krolicki, Don Durfee, Caren Bohan, Steve Holland, Margaret Talev, Sam Feist, Oliver Knox, Zeke Miller.

SPOTTED last night at a private room in The Smith celebrating multiple birthdays: Adam Noah, Paul Holder, Kristen York, Chris Berardini, Greg Lowman, Steve Rebillot, Andrew Mills, Bennett Richardson, Katie Adams, Michael Borden, Jeff Strunk, Mat Lapinski, Nick Podsiadly, Danielle Burr, Danny Fernandez, Ed Elfmann and Alex Hergott.

SPOTTED at the Beer Institute's "Welcome Back to Congress" event in Rayburn: Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Rep. Erik Paulsen (D-Minn.), Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.), Jim McGreevy of the Beer Institute, Doug Bailey, Tim Scully and Lance Hastings, David Morgenstern and Carl Thorsen.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Dan Ronayne, president of Asta Strategies, an RNC and BC '04 alum. **How he views the Trump presidency as going:** "I actually was asked to meet with him at Trump Tower before he announced his candidacy about possibly serving as his communications director. It was an interesting day. Like most of us, I didn't see this coming. I opted instead to be the communications director for the Invictus Games and watched the campaign as a spectator. I would have advised him to do the opposite of just about everything he did, so what do I know. Invictus Games and the healing power of adaptive sports for our wounded warriors was a life changing experience -- things work out right." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:**
<http://politi.co/2j2ELjW>

BIRTHDAYS: N.J. Gov. Chris Christie ... Carly Fiorina (hat tips: Frank Sadler, Casey Enders and Arjun Mody) ... ABC News' Elizabeth Vargas ... Brittany Bramell, TSA's assistant administrator of public affairs ... Matt Littman (h/t Heather Podesta) ... Ryan Mahoney, RNC's comms director, celebrating by getting taken him out to dinner by girlfriend Allie Brandenburger (h/t Allie) ... CBS News political director Steve Chaggarris ... Ari Schaffer of the White House's research/comms shop ... Peter Barnes (h/t James Rosen) ... Rep. Sander Levin (D-Mich.) ... Rep. Buddy Carter (R-Ga.) ... Rep. Danny

Davis (D-Ill.) ... Rep. Bill Keating (D-Mass.) ... Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.) ... Jason Schechter, chief comms officer for Bloomberg LP ... Politico's Paul Volpe and Meredith McPhillips ... Madeleine Gilmer ... Kathy Grannis Allen of Airlines For America ... Jaime Leifer of PublicAffairs ... John Hagner ... Leslie Barkemeyer ... Tim Ogborn ... Gillian Turner of the Jones Group, alumna of the Bush and Obama NSC, Fox News contributor, and proud momma to Olivia the Havanese (h/ts former NSC colleague Ben Chang and Paris Dennard) ...

... **Clyde Prestowitz**, president of the Economic Strategy Institute ... Alex Leo ... Daniel Flesch ... Christa Davis, development officer for women's empowerment at Project Concern International (h/t Richard Parker) ... Joshua Baca, SVP, DDC Public Affairs and former national coalitions director for Romney (h/t wife Jen) ... Robin Parker, executive director at Sunflower Foundation (h/t Jon Haber) ... NPR's Claire Harbage ... Elizabeth Robillard ... former Rep. Kendrick Meek (D-Fla.) ... Cameron Hardesty, head of products at Urban Stems ... Peter Schanzer, senior associate at Jefferies ... Owen Kibenge ... Spotify's Tamas Wilner ... Kevin Rieg ... Elbert Zeigler ... Ben Toribio ... William Stone ... Gina Martinez ... Bruce King ... Kristi Thompson ... Jason Harvey ... Michael Ethridge ... Dan Drummond ... Scott McCrary ... Bill Ritter ... Douglass Daniel ... Jack Ellis Farnsworth ... Gordon Hickey ... Bill Turnage ... Ken Smukler ... Bobby Bailey ... Marie Wilson ... Erin Giesser ... John Hagner ... Howard Zucker ... Sara Fellenz (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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Sent: Fri 3/23/2018 6:24:20 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Baker Donelson signs 3 — GM adds a lobbying firm — How the steel and aluminum lobbies feel about Trump's tariff exemptions

By Theodoric Meyer and Marianne LeVine | 03/23/2018 02:22 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Garrett Ross

BAKER DONELSON SIGNS 3: **Jim Dyer**, the longtime lobbyist and former **Podesta Group** principal who joined **Baker Donelson** earlier this year, has signed his first clients. He'll lobby on defense issues for **AECOM**, the **FlexTech Alliance** and **General Dynamics**. All three are former Podesta Group clients.

MORE NEW BUSINESS: **General Motors** has hired the **DS2 Group's Donn Salvosa** to lobby on autonomous and electric vehicles, according to a disclosure filing. General Motors also brought on **Hance Scarborough** in January to lobby on autonomous vehicles, among other issues, and several of the half-dozen other lobbying shops the automaker has on retainer work on the issue, too.

- **Major League Baseball**, meanwhile, hired **Ernst & Young's Gary Gasper** and **Nick Giordano** earlier this month to lobby on tax reform. And the city of Birmingham, Ala., has brought on two new lobbying firms, **Forbes Tate Partners** and **Pine Street Strategies**. (All three Forbes Tate lobbyists representing Birmingham have Alabama ties: **Ryan Welch** used to be Sen. **Richard Shelby**'s legislative director, and **Libby Greer** and **Zach Williams** are both native Alabamians who helped Sen. **Doug Jones**' campaign.)

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. This newsletter is powered by Frosted Flakes, black coffee and your tips. Keep 'em coming: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

STEEL, ALUMINUM LOBBIES UNFAZED BY NEW EXEMPTIONS: Trade groups representing American steel and aluminum companies don't seem too bothered by the Trump administration's announcement on Thursday that it would exempt the European Union, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and South Korea from its new steel and aluminum tariffs. "I'm not concerned yet, because there's a lot of moving parts here and the questions we don't know the answer to are which countries ultimately do get exempted - this is a provisional list," **Scott Paul**, the president of the **Alliance for American Manufacturing**, which represents steel producers and unions, told PI.

- **Heidi Brock**, the president and chief executive of the **Aluminum Association**, wrote in a public email that the group was "pleased" with the tariff exemptions. "The Aluminum Association continues to argue that all countries designated as market economies by the Commerce Department should be exempt from these tariffs," she wrote. "The announced exemptions are a step in the right direction." But the **United Steelworkers** seem more concerned. The union said in a statement that "the impact of individual country exemptions or

product exclusions needs to be carefully examined," adding that "it would be a tragedy if the initial optimism of our members about the [tariffs'] impact on their livelihoods was undermined by unwise and overly broad exemptions and exclusions."

- **Lloyd O'Carroll**, an independent analyst of the steel and aluminum industry, said none of the recently exempted countries are major aluminum suppliers to the U.S. But he noted that Brazil and South Korea are major steel producers and that the exemptions do "weaken the impact of the tariffs." American steel companies "should at least be irritated," he said.

WHAT CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA DID FOR BOLTON'S SUPER PAC: **The New York Times'** **Matt Rosenberg** got his hands on a copy of the contract of between **Cambridge Analytica** and the super PAC started by President **Donald Trump's** new national security adviser, **John Bolton** (the uncreatively named **John Bolton Super PAC**). "The contract broadly describes the services to be delivered by Cambridge as 'behavioral microtargeting with psychographic messaging.'"

- "To do that work, Cambridge used **Facebook** data, according to the documents and two former employees familiar with the work. 'The data and modeling Bolton's PAC received was derived from the Facebook data,' said **Christopher Wylie**, a data expert who was part of the team that founded Cambridge Analytica. 'We definitely told them about how we were doing it. We talked about it in conference calls, in meetings.'" [Full story.](#)

BROIDY OFFERED TO LOBBY ON RUSSIAN SANCTIONS: "**Elliott Broidy**, a top fundraiser for President **Donald Trump**, offered last year to help a Moscow-based lawyer get Russian companies removed from a U.S. sanctions list," **Bloomberg News'** **Zachary Mider** and **David Voreacos** report. "Broidy made the offer after an inquiry from **Andrei Baev**, an energy lawyer at **Chadbourne & Parke LLP**, both men acknowledged in statements to Bloomberg News this week. In a proposal sent to Baev shortly before Trump's January 2017 inauguration, Broidy sketched out a potential campaign to influence top U.S. officials, according to a person with knowledge of the talks who spoke on condition of anonymity. The plan never went forward, Broidy and Baev said, and no such lobbying took place." [Full story.](#)

- Broidy, a **Republican National Committee** deputy finance chairman, has drawn attention recently for his efforts to influence the Trump administration. **The New York Times** [reported](#) on Wednesday that **George Nader**, an adviser to Crown Prince **Mohammed bin Zayed** of the United Arab Emirates, had pushed the White House to ax Secretary of State **Rex Tillerson**, backed "confrontational approaches to Iran and Qatar and repeatedly [pressed] the president to meet privately outside the White House with the leader of the U.A.E."

STEYER SPEAKS: The **Center for Public Integrity's Sarah Kleiner** got an interview with the Democratic megadonor **Tom Steyer**, who's poured millions of dollars into TV ads calling for Trump's impeachment. "We're not shy about it," Steyer said. "You should try and call up the Koch brothers to get a lengthy interview to hear what they're really thinking." [Full story.](#)

TOO MUCH PULL: In a new poll conducted for the **Kaiser Family Foundation**, researchers asked whether various interests had "too much influence" in Washington. The most common

answer: big business. Seventy-six percent of respondents said big business had too much pull in Washington, follow by the pharmaceutical industry (72 percent); Wall Street (69 percent), health insurers (66 percent) and the **National Rifle Association** (52 percent). Fewer than half of those polled thought hospitals, doctors, labor unions, the **AARP** or small businesses had too much influence. And only 2 percent of respondents felt "people like them" had too much pull. **Here are the full results.**

JOBS REPORT

- **Matt Giacona** will start at **Venn Strategies** on Monday as an associate. He'll be lobbying on tax and economic policy for Venn clients including the **Employee-Owned S Corporations of America**. He previously worked in government relations for the **U.S. Global Leadership Coalition**.

- **Parita Shah** is joining **Pandora's** Washington office as head of public affairs. She was previously the **Millennium Challenge Corporation's** chief of staff during the Obama administration and before that worked for **APCO Worldwide**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

FreedomWorks Victory 2018 (Sens. Mike Lee, Ron Johnson and Rand Paul; Reps. Rod Blum, Dave Brat and Thomas Massie; Mark Green; Patrick Morrissey; Matt Rosendale; FreedomWorks PAC)

NEW PACs:

None

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Abernathy Consultants, Cathy: Account Control Technology Inc.
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz: AECOM
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz: FlexTech Alliance
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz: General Dynamics
Carmen Group Incorporated: ISN Corporation
DS2 Group LLC: General Motors Company
Ernst & Young LLP (Washington Council Ernst & Young): Major League Baseball
Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting: Trust for America's Health
Forbes-Tate: City of Birmingham, Ala.
Forbes-Tate: Evolva Inc.
Franklin Square Group LLC: Strava Inc.
Loper Consulting LLC: Patients for Affordable Drugs NOW Inc.
Pine Street Strategies: City of Birmingham, Ala.
Sonoran Policy Group LLC: Texans Against High-Speed Rail
VantageKnight Inc.: Sunrun Inc.

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

None

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 11/6/2017 10:42:30 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by ExxonMobil: What to watch for as Bonn climate talks kick off — Next step toward WOTUS unwind arrives — Trump pushes Aramco for U.S. listing

By Anthony Adragna | 11/06/2017 05:40 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff and Kalina Oroschakoff

BONN JOUR! Starting today, international negotiators gather in Bonn for the COP23 — the first U.N. climate summit to be chaired by a small island nation, Fiji. It's also the first meeting after President Donald Trump announced his intention to pull the U.S. out of the landmark Paris accord in June. Let's take a quick look at what to expect between now and the conference's end on Nov. 17:

—**The U.S. question:** An open question remains how much the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Paris accord will be a distraction to the nitty gritty work of filling out the details of the 2015 pact. The Trump administration opted to send longtime diplomat Thomas Shannon as the delegation's lead in Bonn rather than a cabinet member, suggesting a low-key role on the sidelines. But U.S. officials are expected to tout the benefits of nuclear energy and fossil fuels in combating emissions, according to the New York Times. Meanwhile, a high-profile delegation of U.S. governors, mayors, private sector leaders and others are traveling the conference as a signal that much of the country remains committed to aggressive climate action.

—**Loss and damage:** Fiji, backed by other vulnerable island countries, is keen to focus attention on the loss and damage already linked to climate change (think, hurricanes, floods and rising sea levels). Many island nations are raising pressure on negotiators, especially from wealthy nations, to tackle loss and damage issues such as funding, risk preparedness, weather forecasting and new insurance proposals. This, compounded by a number of high-profile weather events this year, will make it one of the more challenging discussions at the summit, according to Camilla Born from the environmental think tank E3G.

—**Working out the rules:** Another challenge will be to advance work on rules to make sure countries meet the Paris agreement's goals ahead of next year's COP24 — when parties said they would sign off on the rulebook underpinning the deal. A thorny discussion here will be around setting a common and transparent monitoring and reporting system that ensures emissions reductions can be compared across countries. It's a sensitive issue with emerging economies such as China, long wary of letting outsiders glance their domestic books, but a priority for the EU, which wants to make sure everyone pulls their weight. The battle could therefore be over whether it will be a bifurcated system, setting different guidelines for developed and developing countries, or universal.

—**Assessing progress:** Negotiators will also have to work out how the first stock-take of national progress toward achieving climate pledges will play out next year. The idea behind the 2018 meeting is to pave the way for countries to increase their emissions reduction targets in 2020, when parties are for the first time required to communicate renewed (and ideally

strengthened) commitments, as set out under the Paris deal. The outgoing Moroccan COP22 presidency and the incoming Fijian presidency have published a [joint document](#) outlining their vision for the meeting.

—**Who's coming?** According to [the UNFCCC](#), close to 20 world leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, are slated to attend. Also expected to participate: Arnold Schwarzenegger, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, California Governor Jerry Brown, UN Special Envoy Michael Bloomberg and several U.S. lawmakers, including Sens. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) and [Brian Schatz](#). EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt [won't attend](#), though other agency staff will.

ICYMI: POLITICO Europe's Kalina Oroschakoff and Pro's Emily Holden's seven people to watch during the summit [here](#).

WELCOME TO MONDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Hunton & Williams' Joe Stanko was first to identify Laika as the first dog in space 60 years ago. For today: Which current senator is a former shoe store owner? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

NEXT STEP IN WOTUS UNWIND: EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers sent a proposed rule delaying the effective date of the Waters of the U.S. Rule to the White House for review, a move designed to give the administration more time to design its own version, Pro's Eric Wolff [reports](#). An agency spokeswoman said the action would "amend the effective date associated with the 2015 Clean Water Rule to give the agencies time to consider the two-step process proposing to rescind and revise the 2015 rule." The new proposed rule is separate from any rule intended to replace WOTUS. The agency declined to say when the new effective date would be or if it would make any other tweaks to the regulation.

DEMOCRATS TALK DISASTER RELIEF PRIORITIES: Thirty members of the Senate Democratic caucus sent [a letter](#) Friday to OMB Director Mick Mulvaney outlining their priorities for a third disaster supplemental spending package expected to be requested by the administration later this month. "We can invest in technology, conservation and infrastructure that will mitigate further damage and make our communities more resilient," they wrote. Particular requests include "specific legislative language" concerning electric grid reconstruction in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as "further investments" in NOAA's weather infrastructure and forecasting capabilities.

High-profile visitors: House Transportation Chairman [Bill Shuster](#) and Ranking Member [Peter DeFazio](#), Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) and Senate EPW Ranking Member [Tom Carper](#) were among those lawmakers visiting Puerto Rico this weekend, according to [local media](#). Also along: Sen. [Kamala Harris](#), Sen. [Bill Cassidy](#), Sen. [Al Franken](#) and Rep. [Garret Graves](#).

Let's reschedule: House Homeland Security ranking member [Bennie Thompson](#) wrote to Chairman [Michael McCaul](#) asking for the panel to reschedule a hearing on hurricane response

and recovery that was suddenly shelved last week. Link to letter [here](#).

QUITE THE PUBLIC PITCH: Tweeting at 2:49 a.m. in Hawaii, Trump [asked](#) Saudi Arabia to list shares of its biggest oil company on the New York Stock Exchange. "Would very much appreciate Saudi Arabia doing their IPO of Aramco with the New York Stock Exchange. Important to the United States!" he [wrote](#). That comes as Saudi Arabia moves toward an offering of shares of its state-run oil company — the world's largest energy company — on international markets. He later told reporters aboard Air Force One: "They're not looking at it, but I want them to strongly consider the New York Stock Exchange or NASDAQ, or frankly anybody else located in this country, but those are the big two... I just spoke to the king a little while ago, and they will consider it."

ANOTHER INVESTIGATION ARRIVES: GAO agreed last week to probe whether Pruitt's appearance in an August [video](#) from National Cattlemen's Beef Association violated laws "on the use of appropriated funds for lobbying and publicity or propaganda purposes and the Antideficiency Act," Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). House Democrats asked GAO to begin the investigation.

TEAM ETHANOL FIRES BACK: If Trump watches the ads on Fox & Friends, then he's getting an earful on the Renewable Fuels Standard these days. Starting today and through the Nov. 20, Fuels America, an umbrella group of ethanol producers and trade associations, will be running an [ad](#) reminding Trump of his promises to farmers and accusing oil refiners of demanding a taxpayer funded bailout. The refiners had the inverse ad up during Fox & Friends last week.

Ticking clock: EPA's final RFS rule went to the White House for review last week, and Pruitt has promised to release it by the statutory Nov. 30 deadline.

**** Presented by ExxonMobil:** We're collaborating with FuelCell Energy on a novel idea to use fuel cells to capture carbon at natural gas power plants, and in the process reduce emissions and increase electrical output. This technology could be a game changer in addressing the world's growing need for energy, while also reducing the impact on the environment. [Learn more.](#) **

HIT THE FLOOR! House lawmakers this week are expected to vote on the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act [H.R. 3043 \(115\)](#), which aims to speed the regulatory approval process for hydropower projects. And they're also expected to consider compromise legislation [H.R. 2874 \(115\)](#) overhauling the National Flood Insurance Program to impose new penalties on homeowners with repeat flooding, though with softer consequences than originally floated.

MEGA HOUSE ENERGY PACKAGE GETS MARKUP: The House Natural Resources Committee is expected Wednesday to [mark up](#) a broad new energy package [H.R. 4239 \(115\)](#) on Wednesday after its introduction on Friday, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). Among other provisions, the SECURE American Energy Act would roll back Obama-era offshore drilling rules, create an offshore oil and gas revenue program for East Coast drilling and give more oil and gas permitting power to the states.

CLIMATE REPORT AT ODDS WITH TRUMP STANCE: Even as the White House stuck with its line the climate "has changed and is always changing," scientists from the 13 agencies who worked on the [National Climate Assessment](#) that concluded human activity is driving climate change said they saw no effort from the administration to meddle in their work, Pro's Emily Holden [reports](#).

In response, Paul Bledsoe, who helped release the first national climate assessment while at the Clinton White House in 2000, emails his take: "The White House clearly judged that the firestorm over delaying or suppressing the report release, especially ahead of the Bonn climate talks, would be greater than from the findings themselves."

NEW TACTIC IN CLIMATE FIGHT: Speaking at the Vatican over the weekend, California Gov. Jerry Brown asked the Catholic Church to throw its weight behind his efforts to undermine Trump's climate rollbacks abroad, POLITICO California's David Siders [reports](#). Brown urged religious establishments to help "awaken the world" to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and described the president's rejection of mainstream climate science as a "lie within a lie."

PRINCE OF WYOMING? Blackwater founder Erik Prince tells [NBC News](#) he's still "mulling" a challenge to Wyoming Sen. [John Barrasso](#). "They have been in the wilderness for eight years, saying oh, if only we had a Republican president and now they have one," he said. "[They're] kind of out of excuses." One fact of note: Barrasso has received just 5.5 percent of his total \$2.4 million haul of itemized individual contributions since the start of 2013 from Wyoming. There's no public polling on how the theoretical Barrasso v. Prince matchup would go.

MAIL CALL! TIME OUT! Two top Energy and Commerce Committee Democrats — [Frank Pallone](#) and [Bobby Rush](#) — sent a [letter](#) asking that a [hearing](#) slated for Tuesday on two bills making significant changes to the Energy Star programs and efficiency standards for ceiling fans be postponed until witnesses from EPA and DOE are available. "These bills would make substantial changes to the popular Energy Star Program and efficiency standards for ceiling fans, and should not be rushed through the Committee process without adequate input from the agencies tasked with executing these potential changes," they wrote to Chairman [Greg Walden](#) and Energy Subcommittee Chairman [Fred Upton](#).

DEMOCRATS TO PRUITT: WITHDRAW SCIENCE ADVISER POLICY: Six senior House Democrats on the Science and Energy and Commerce committees [asked](#) Pruitt to withdraw his "biased, harmful" policy barring scientists who receive agency grants from serving on scientific advisory panels. "We advise you to follow [Federal Advisory Committee Act] regulations and policy in selecting qualified individuals to serve on EPA's science advisory committees just as previous administrations led by both parties have done. Anything less is a great disservice to the public interest," they wrote.

CALIFORNIA TALLIES WILDFIRE NEEDS: Golden State bigwigs, including Brown, Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) and 39 California House members, sent a letter to Trump Friday asking for \$7.4 billion in federal funds to help the state recover from devastating wildfires. Letter link [here](#).

MORE TIME NEEDED: A bicameral group of 81 Democrats, led by Sens. [Maria Cantwell](#) and [Tom Udall](#) and Reps. [Jared Polis](#) and [Raúl Grijalva](#), asked Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in a [letter](#) released Friday to extend the public comment period on its proposed repeal of BLM's methane waste rule from 30 to 90 days and to offer public hearings in the Western U.S. "The American people deserve to get a proper return on this natural gas resource, and any attempt to roll back this rule would represent a giveaway to industry polluters," they wrote.

THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL: In light of U.S. Forest Service recommendations to potentially allow new uranium mining near the Grand Canyon, House Natural Resources Ranking Member [Raúl Grijalva](#) wrote Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) a [letter](#) to ask for a hearing on his bill [H.R. 360 \(115\)](#) to create a national monument in the area. Grijalva separately [asked](#) Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue for his rationale behind the recommendation and whether the public would have the opportunity to comment.

NEW PHASE OF KEYSTONE FIGHT: Volunteers with Bold Nebraska went door-to-door in the five Nebraska Public Service Commissioners home districts to raise concerns about the use of eminent domain and environmental concerns surrounding the Keystone XL pipeline. The Nebraska regulators expect to make a final decision on the pipeline permit by the end of the year.

ADS URGE NO DRILLING IN ANWR: The League of Conservation voters is targeting Republican Reps. [Bruce Poliquin](#) and [Darrell Issa](#) with ads ([sample here](#)) urging them not to support opening ANWR to drilling. It's part of an ongoing \$200,000 campaign.

NO REAL RUSH ON METHANE: EPA is now all-but-certain not to take any final action on the Obama-era 2016 methane regulation targeting emissions rule for new oil and gas wells until the next year, Pro's Alex Guillén reports in [Energy Regulation Watch](#). That comes as the agency issued a [notice](#) last week floated the idea (offered by the American Petroleum Institute) to implement longer phase-in periods for key requirements of the rule rather than seeking an outright stay.

MOVER, SHAKER: Katie Waldman leaves her post as press secretary for Montana Sen. [Steve Daines](#) this Thursday for a "new opportunity."

QUICK HITS

— Donald Trump accused of obstructing satellite research into climate change. [The Guardian](#).

— To make coal plants in southern Illinois competitive, Dynegy seeks lawmakers' help. [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

— In the Country Where Coal Is King, a Battle With the EU Looms. [Bloomberg](#).

— Contractor wasted millions on unnecessary supplies for S.C.'s failed nuclear reactors. [Post and Courier](#).

— Ohio city refuses to give up fight against gas pipeline. [AP](#).

— Wyoming's quiet governor faces a brash Interior Secretary, with a bird in the balance. [Casper Star-Tribune](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The New Eurasia Energy Landscape](#)," German Marshall Fund, 1744 R Street NW

12:00 p.m. — House Ways and Means [markup](#) of GOP tax overhaul bill, 1100 Longworth

5:00 p.m. — House of Representatives Committee on Rules meeting on Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017, H-313

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — House Energy and Commerce Committee [hearing](#) on energy bills, House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

10:00 a.m. — "[Examining Challenges in Puerto Rico's Recovery and the Role of the Financial Oversight and Management Board](#)," House Natural Resources Committee, Longworth 1324

2:00 p.m. — "[Legislative Hearing on Discussion Draft Legislation to Overhaul Federal Lands Energy Policy](#)," House Natural Resources Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee, Longworth 1324

5:00 p.m. — "[Re-energizing Nuclear Security](#)," The Stimson Center, 1211 Connecticut Ave, NW, 8th Floor

WEDNESDAY

9:45 a.m. — Senate Commerce Committee holds [vote](#) on the Bridenstine nomination and others, Dirksen 106

10:00 a.m. — The House Science Committee's Energy Subcommittee and Environment Subcommittee hold a [joint hearing](#) on "Geoengineering: Innovation, Research, and Technology," Rayburn 2318

10:00 a.m. — [Markup](#) on Offshore-Onshore Energy Bill, 8 Additional Measures, House Natural Resources Committee, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works Committee holds [hearing](#) on White and Wheeler nominations, Dirksen 406

THURSDAY

9:15 a.m. — "[Heavy-Duty Innovation: Energy, Automation & Tech in the Trucking Sector](#)," Securing America's Future Energy, The Loft at 600 F, 600 F Street Northwest

9:30 a.m. — ITC hearing on countervailing and anti-dumping duty investigations into Argentine and Indonesian biodiesel, 500 E St., SW

9:30 a.m. — "[What Lessons Can Be Learned from Power Africa?](#)" Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

10:15 a.m. — "[H.R. ____, Farm Regulatory Certainty Act](#)," House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee, Rayburn 2322

11:00 a.m. — FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee holds discussion with Platts reporters and other credentialed press, S&P Global Platts Washington office, 1200 G St., NW, Ste. 1000

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To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/11/what-to-watch-for-as-bonn-climate-talks-kick-off-025389>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

State Dept's Shannon to lead U.S. delegation to climate talks [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 10/06/2017 07:18 PM EDT

Thomas Shannon, the State Department's undersecretary for political affairs, will lead the U.S. delegation to a major international climate change summit next month in Bonn, Germany, according to an administration official.

The news comes amid swirling rumors that Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt was angling to lead the delegation, a move that would have made a skeptic of established climate science the face of the United States at the talks.

In previous years, the State Department's climate envoy led the U.S. delegation to the annual gathering. But the Trump administration has declined to fill that position.

The Bonn negotiations are aimed at implementing the 2015 Paris climate change agreement, from which President Donald Trump has said he intends to withdraw.

Neither the White House nor the State Department responded to requests for comment.

To view online [click here](#).

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EPA, Army Corps seek delay to WOTUS start date [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 11/03/2017 05:48 PM EDT

The EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers sent to the White House a proposed rule on Friday delaying the effective date of the Waters of the United States regulation to give the administration more time to craft a new version of rule, according to an agency spokeswoman.

EPA declined to specify the new effective date for the regulation, also called the Clean Water Rule. Nor would it say if the proposed rule would make other changes. The notice will appear on the OMB's website this morning.

"In order to provide regulatory certainty, EPA and the Department of the Army have sent a proposed rule to the Office of Management and Budget for interagency review that would amend the effective date associated with the 2015 Clean Water Rule to give the agencies time to consider the two-step process proposing to rescind and revise the 2015 rule," the spokeswoman said.

In June, EPA proposed a repeal of the rule, which aimed to clarify which waters fall under federal jurisdiction. The comment period closed in September with 190,000 comments filed.

The proposed rule is separate from any rule intended to replace WOTUS.

"The agency is also in the process of holding listening sessions with states, tribes and stakeholders as we work to develop a proposed step 2 rule that would revise the definition of 'waters of the United States,'" the spokeswoman said.

The current rule was stayed by the 6th Circuit in some states last year.

WHAT'S NEXT: OMB will send the proposed rule back to EPA for release and publication in the Federal Register.

To view online [click here](#).

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Trump urges Saudi Arabia to list state oil company on N.Y. stock exchange [Back](#)

By POLITICO Staff | 11/04/2017 09:58 AM EDT

President Donald Trump on Saturday urged Saudi Arabia to list shares of its biggest oil company on the New York Stock Exchange.

"Would very much appreciate Saudi Arabia doing their IPO of Aramco with the New York Stock Exchange. Important to the United States!" Trump tweeted shortly before he was due to leave Hawaii on the first leg of a 13-day trip to Asia.

Saudi Arabia is preparing to sell shares of its state-run oil company — the world's largest energy company — on international markets.

Saudi Prince Mohammed has said the initial public offering of about \$100 billion could value the company at some \$2 trillion, according to Reuters.

In an on-the-record meeting with reporters aboard Air Force One later Saturday, Trump clarified: "Aramco is going public. It will be perhaps the biggest going public ever. It's the Saudi Arabian oil company and it will be just about the biggest ever.

"And I want them to consider, because right now they're not looking at it, because of litigation, risk and other risk, which is very sad, they're not looking at it, but I want them to strongly consider the New York Stock Exchange or NASDAQ, or frankly anybody else located in this country, but those are the big two

"I just spoke to the King a little while ago, and they will consider it."

The Trump administration has been working hard to strengthen ties with Saudi Arabia.

Trump in August described his relationship with King Salman of Saudi Arabia as "very great," calling him "a friend of mine."

Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner made an unannounced visit to Saudi Arabia at the end of October — his third trip to the country this year. He was accompanied by deputy national security adviser Dina Powell and Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt.

Kushner is tasked with leading the administration's efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. The White House would not say who Kushner met with on his visit.

In August, Trump offered to personally mediate a dispute between Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Arab countries centered around alleged support of terrorism.

"I was telling the emir before that if I can help between UAE and Saudi Arabia ... if I can help mediate between Qatar and, in particular, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, I would be willing to do

so," he said at the time.

Trump visited Saudi Arabia with a large White House entourage in May, committing the United States to a deeper alliance with the "sacred land."

As a presidential candidate, Trump had previously accused the Muslim-majority kingdom of complicity in the World Trade Center attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

To view online [click here](#).

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GAO to review Pruitt appearance in beef group's anti-WOTUS video [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 11/03/2017 06:22 PM EDT

The Government Accountability Office will investigate EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's appearance in an industry group's video calling for public comments in favor of repealing the Waters of the U.S. rule, according to a [letter](#) released today by House Democrats.

Rep. [Peter DeFazio](#) (D-Ore.) asked GAO to investigate whether Pruitt's actions violated laws "on the use of appropriated funds for lobbying and publicity or propaganda purposes and the Antideficiency Act," according to the letter, dated Oct. 31.

The [video](#) was posted on Aug. 16 by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a major critic of the Obama-era WOTUS regulation. It includes an interview in which Pruitt discusses his criticisms of the rule, along with text urging viewers to submit pre-written comments via the NCBA's website.

The video quickly drew criticisms from environmental groups. EPA at the time [said](#) Pruitt sought "engagement with all stakeholders, especially those who felt their voices were ignored by the previous Administration."

GAO previously dinged the Obama-era EPA in 2015 when it [concluded](#) the agency's use of a "Thunderclap" social media campaign promoting the WOTUS rule amounted to "covert propaganda."

WHAT'S NEXT: GAO's letter does not specify how long the inquiry will take.

To view online [click here](#).

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House Natural Resources Committee unveils new energy bill [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 11/03/2017 03:34 PM EDT

House lawmakers today unveiled a new [energy bill](#) that would roll back Obama-era offshore drilling rules, create an offshore oil and gas revenue program for East Coast drilling and give more oil and gas permitting power to the states.

Majority Whip [Steve Scalise](#) (R-La.) introduced the bill, with House Natural Resource Committee Chairman Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) and Texas Democratic Reps. [Henry Cuellar](#) and [Vicente Gonzalez](#). The bill is expected to move through the committee next week and hit the House floor "in the near future," committee spokesman Parish Braden said.

Among the bill's provisions is a directive to create an offshore oil and gas revenue program for states along the Atlantic coast and Alaska, where the Interior Department is [exploring](#) opening more of the waters for offshore oil drilling.

The bill would also require Congress to approve any future removals of offshore acres from lease sales or establishment of new marine sanctuaries, an apparent response to the Obama administration's [last-minute removal](#) of some Alaska and Atlantic waters from development.

Onshore, the bill would also allow states to oversee drilling plans on federal land within their borders.

The bill calls on Interior to hold a lease sale for wind power projects off the California coast within one year of the bill's passage. Interior would also conduct feasibility studies for wind lease sales off the coasts of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam, with results due in six months and possible sales within a year of the bill's passing.

WHAT'S NEXT: The House Natural Resources Committee expects to take up the bill next week.

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New U.S. climate report at odds with Trump policy [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 11/03/2017 05:10 PM EDT

A sweeping new U.S. government [report](#) concludes that humans have pushed global temperatures to the highest level seen by modern civilization, defying the Trump administration's pronouncements that climate change is a hoax or based on unsettled science.

The report, produced by 13 agencies as part of the congressionally required National Climate Assessment, reinforced years of research that shows human activity was the main reason

temperatures have soared in the past century — and they are likely to keep climbing, boosting sea levels and threatening environmental disasters.

The report contradicts President Donald Trump's rejection of climate science, his plan to withdraw the U.S. from a global pact to fight climate change and his moves to unwind a slate of policies put in place under former President Barack Obama to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"Foremost, we conclude based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities are the dominant causes of global warming," said David Fahey, one of the lead authors. "For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation for the warming observed."

However, the White House stuck to its stance that climate "has changed and is always changing," and it pointed to portions of the report about the uncertainty around the Earth's sensitivity to greenhouse gas emissions.

White House spokesman Raj Shah said in a statement that the Trump administration "supports rigorous scientific analysis and debate," and the U.S. will continue to promote access to "affordable and reliable energy needed to grow economically," support technology and infrastructure that reduce emissions and "enable us to address future risks, including climate related risks."

Fahey, a scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, told reporters on a conference call that he saw no attempt to influence the report by the Trump administration.

"I'm quite confident to say there's been no political interference in the scientific messages of this report," Fahey said.

Virginia Burkett, an Interior Department climate scientist and chair of the subcommittee on Global Change Research, emphasized that the report steered clear of recommending any policies to deal with climate change, saying it was limited to "strictly the science."

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who said he did not believe that man-made emissions were the main cause of climate change and has moved to eliminate Obama's rules curbing carbon dioxide pollution from power plants, did not comment on the report.

The report was reviewed by scientists at the National Academies, released for public comment and screened by federal agencies under both the Obama and Trump administrations.

Juanita Constible, a special projects director at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a blog post the report confirms what many other previous studies had shown.

"It's essential that our federal leaders in Congress and the Executive Branch take seriously the dire conclusions from the painstaking and authoritative work in the [the report] — and more importantly, to urgently act on the findings," Constible wrote.

Bob Kopp, a climate scientist at Rutgers University and a report contributor, said the findings "reaffirmed that climate change is real, that humans are the dominant cause of warming, and that it is having an effect in the U.S. And those effects will grow more severe as long as we continue to emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere."

Sea levels are expected to rise one to four feet by the end of the century and could swell by up to eight feet if emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise, the Climate Science Special Report says.

Episodes of heavy rainfall are becoming more frequent and intense, and heat waves will become more common. Kopp said the report also shows the U.S. can expect more compounded extreme weather events, like the multiple hurricanes and wildfires that occurred this summer.

Annual global average temperatures are expected to rise by 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050. And although the growth in global carbon dioxide emissions is slowing, that trend is moving too slowly to keep temperatures below a dangerous tipping point of 3.6 degrees, or 2.0 degrees Celsius, above pre-industrial levels that would see more devastating impacts, the scientists found.

The report is the most comprehensive study since the last National Climate Assessment was published three years ago and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its physical science report four years ago, Kopp said.

The U.S. Global Change Research Program, which coordinates the assessment, also released a draft of a second volume, which examines impacts on public health and the environment, and a draft of a report on changes in carbon levels.

The report about how climate change impacts Americans, which will undergo public comment, notes that "Americans are responding to rapid changes affecting their everyday lives and livelihoods," because of climate change.

Reservoir managers in the Colorado River Basin are adjusting to lower water levels, cities along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts are seeing more flooding and storm surge from rising seas and heavier rains. Farms in the Midwest are adopting new crop management strategies, and communities in the western U.S. face more wildfires, it notes.

Some risks are already unavoidable while others could be reversed if greenhouse gas emissions decline, according to the report.

"Climate change puts many things Americans care about at risk, both now and in the future, and risks will intensify without action," the report says.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

To view online [click here](#).

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Jerry Brown's holy war on Donald Trump [Back](#)

By David Siders | 11/05/2017 07:12 AM EDT

VATICAN CITY — California has opened a new front in its war on Donald Trump — the Vatican, where Gov. Jerry Brown on Saturday sought to enlist the Catholic Church in his effort to undermine the president's climate policies abroad.

Brown, addressing a somber gathering of scientists, politicians and religious leaders here, rebuked Trump's rejection of mainstream climate science as a "lie within a lie," urging religious establishments to help "awaken the world" to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The conspicuous repudiation of the president, in this center of Christendom on the eve of this week's international climate talks in Bonn, Germany, served to underscore Brown's role as one of the most prominent figures in the anti-Trump resistance. But it also highlighted California's deep antipathy toward the president on a global stage, allying the nation's most populous state with the international community against the backdrop of simmering tension between the White House and Pope Francis on climate change.

The pope, who did not appear at the conference, implicitly criticized the president in October for withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement, a decision that weighed heavily over the gathering.

Brown wasn't the only Californian emphasizing the American divide over global warming — or the state's determination to blaze its own trail on the issue. Rallying the same audience the previous day, California Democratic state Senate leader Kevin de León cast California's leaders — and not, explicitly, Washington's — as the "faithful stewards of God's creation."

Daniel Kammen, the University of California, Berkeley, professor who resigned noisily from his role as science envoy to the State Department in August, called Trump's election America's "existential crisis" and encouraged efforts to impeach him. And California Democratic Congressman Scott Peters said the relatively large proportion of U.S. Congress members who are Catholic is "one reason why Pope Francis' commitment to making environmental stewardship a priority of his papacy has such a potential to affect American climate policy."

The meeting, hosted by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, preceded two weeks of climate talks in Bonn, where Brown and leaders of other Democratic states will seek to persuade the world's nations that wide swaths of the United States remain committed to the Paris agreement. Trump's withdrawal from the pact has cast a cloud over the upcoming gathering in Germany.

Still, California's Democratic governor minimized the significance of Trump's withdrawal from the accord, saying the decision helped focus public attention on the issue.

In comparison to worldwide efforts to address climate change, Brown said, "The Trump factor is very small, very small indeed."

Instead, Brown called for a fundamental transformation of people's way of life.

"It's not just a light rinse," Brown said. "We need a total, I might say brainwashing. We need to wash our brains out and see a very different kind of world."

Yet the Catholic Church's ability to move American public opinion on climate change remains in doubt. For one thing, relations between Trump and the spiritual leader of America's more than 50 million Catholics remain cool after Pope Francis criticized Trump on issues ranging from climate change to immigration to refugee resettlement.

"The state of relations between the pope and Trump is not good and has never been good," longtime Vatican analyst Iacopo Scaramuzzi said in an email. "They are openly at odds on almost every point, from personal style of life to issues as climate change or migrations, from attitude towards China, Iran or Cuba to the concept of 'people' and 'populism.'"

While the pope's encyclical on the environment served as an inspiration for negotiations in Paris two years ago, many climate activists hoped lobbying by a popular religious figure might also nudge public opinion on climate among conservatives in the United States. There is little evidence that has happened.

Following the encyclical's release and the pope's 2015 U.S. tour, researchers at the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication found a short-term increase in the number of Americans who said climate change was a "moral," "social justice" or "poverty" issue. Soon after, however, they found public opinion returned to pre-encyclical levels.

"It was him coming to the United States, where he got 24-7, wall-to-wall coverage we saw a significant impact on public opinion," said Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. "We also found that six months later, that effect had faded away."

Bob Inglis, a former Republican congressman whose progressive views on climate change contributed to his defeat in a South Carolina primary in 2010, said of the pope's encyclical, "I do acknowledge that it hasn't exactly — it hasn't yet turned into the barn burner that I had hoped that it might have been."

For conservatives, Francis may be an imperfect messenger, controversial for his relatively progressive views not only on climate, but on marriage and immigration. The pope and Trump traded jabs during the presidential campaign last year about Trump's proposal to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, and Trump announced his withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement just days after a visit in which the pope handed him a copy of his encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

"I've got a Catholic friend in Congress who will go nameless, who told me that, and he was only

halfway joking, that he thinks this pope is the anti-Christ," Inglis said. "There's a contingent of American Catholics who really think that the pope has left the reservation."

Inglis said he is optimistic for the long-term effect of the pope's advocacy on climate change, as the issue is taught in local parishes and other religious organizations. Climate activist Bill McKibben said the Catholic Church is "one of those bureaucracies through which things work their way kind of slowly," and he said its effects will likely percolate for years.

But Francis is also suffering in America from a problem that he shares with Trump: a declining base. Though about 1 in 5 American adults are still affiliated with the Catholic Church, their numbers are in decline. A survey last month from the Pew Research Center found a majority of U.S. adults do not think it is necessary to believe in God to be moral. And regardless of religious affiliation, climate change has failed in recent elections to register a top level of concern for most voters.

Jim Nicholson, the former secretary of Veterans Affairs and Republican National Committee chairman who served as ambassador to the Holy See under George W. Bush, said Trump's relationship with the Vatican "got off to a ragged start" but has improved steadily and is now "pretty good." He cited Trump's nomination of Callista Gingrich, the wife of former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, to be ambassador to the Holy See.

"There are obvious differences on some subjects, like climate and immigration and the death penalty, always. But there's an awful lot of alignment in values — religious freedom and trafficking and life," he said.

Trump has said he is withdrawing from the Paris agreement because it puts the United States "at a very, very big economic disadvantage." But he heartened many religious leaders with his appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court and his opposition to funding for nongovernment organizations that perform abortions.

For many religious voters, said Mitch Hescox, president of the Evangelical Environmental Network, matters such as abortion and Supreme Court nominations carry more weight at the ballot box than climate change.

"The problem is that [climate change] is not on the radar screen of the reasons they vote yet at this point in time," Hescox said. "That's my job, is to help them to see why it is as important as being pro-life. Our No. 1 message is that climate change is a pro-life issue."

Climate experts stewed throughout the Vatican meeting over global climate projections they described as "horrific," "terrifying" and "depressing."

Brown, who left the Vatican for an 80-minute meeting with Arturo Sosa, the superior general of the Jesuits, said Saturday night that he is "going around enlisting allies" in the battle over climate change.

"What it all comes down to is we've got to act sooner, and we have to act more decisively, and

that's not happening," Brown said. "There's real horror in store for us if we don't take action."

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov];
Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Friedman, Lisa
Sent: Wed 4/25/2018 11:31:32 AM
Subject: Request for comment on hearings

Hi Liz & Jahan,

I'm running a story today that advances the congressional hearings at which Mr. Pruitt will testify Thursday.

The story will include and make reference to a document that I have, entitled "Hot Topics." The story will characterize this document as outlining Mr. Pruitt's potential responses to likely questions during the hearings.

Can you tell me who drafted this document? I'd also like to get a comment on whether it accurately describes answers that Mr. Pruitt has been prepped by staff to give.

I won't attach the actual document but for purposes of verifying its validity with you, this with you it begins:

HOT TOPICS

Condo

Kevin Minoli, EPA's principal deputy general counsel, in a March 30 memo determined that the rate for 30 consecutive days would have equated to a monthly rent of \$1,500. Minoli described that as "reasonable market value." He also found it did not constitute a "prohibited gift." I would be happy to provide that memo to your staff.

These, according to the document, are some of the other topics he is prepared to address — several of which I will make reference to in the story:

SCIF; Sweeping the office; Biometric Locks; Bullet proof vehicles and tires; Office Decoration; Netjets; G7 Trip; Staffing (Raises; Samantha Dravis; Alleged Reassignment of Staff); Sue and Settle; Super Fund Task Force; Travel; First Class Travel; Morocco; Non-Commercial Flights; Homebuilders Association Hotel; Advisory Panels (membership, grants); Definers Contract; Chlorpyrifos; Climate change strategic plan; Enforcement; Funding; DOJ Funding; emails; Environmental Justice; War on Lead; IRIS; grants process; meetings with industry; Narragansett Bay; Regulatory Task Force; Reorganizations; and VERA/ViSP.

Finally, the story will point out that, according to the preparations shown in this document, Mr. Pruitt may say that other people were responsible for the bulk of the recent spending and ethics issues like frequent first class travel, the SCIF and pay raises.

I will need a comment on this by 11 a.m, and of course if you have any other comment on Mr. Pruitt's plans for testifying before Congress tomorrow I will certainly include. I'll be out of pocket for the next hour but you can also call me on my cell after 8:30 a.m. if you'd like to speak directly.

Thanks so much,

Lisa

--

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, New York Times
(202) 862-0306 office
(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Thur 3/1/2018 7:33:13 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Boeing names new executive VP of government operations — Former RNC digital director starts new firm — Former Obama official to lead nuclear crisis group

By Marianne LeVine and Theodoric Meyer | 03/01/2018 02:31 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Garrett Ross

BOEING NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE VP OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS: Tim Keating is now executive vice president of government operations for **Boeing**. Prior to his new position, Keating was senior vice president of government operations for the company. In an email to PI, Keating said that in his new role he will oversee Boeing's teams for federal legislative affairs, international policy, state and local and political mobilization, defense and space policy, as well as the Boeing PAC. At the federal level, Keating said that among Boeing's priorities is "a functioning Export-Import Bank." At the state level, Keating said that the company will focus on issues that affect its workforce and production facilities.

- Before joining Boeing in 2008, Keating was senior vice president of global government relations for **Honeywell International**. He was also special assistant to the president and staff director for White House legislative affairs under the Clinton administration.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

FORMER RNC DIGITAL DIRECTOR STARTS NEW FIRM: Tyler Brown, a former digital director for the **Republican National Committee**, has started his own consulting firm, **Hadron Strategies**. "We are helping organizations, companies, trade associations look at how they align digital strategy with their broader organizational goals," Brown told PI. He was previously a senior vice president at **Mercury** and before that held a number of roles at the RNC.

FORMER OBAMA OFFICIAL TO LEAD NUCLEAR CRISIS GROUP: Jon Wolfsthal, who was previously senior director at the National Security Council for nonproliferation and arms control issues, will lead the **Nuclear Crisis Group**, a part of **Global Zero**, a group dedicated to eliminating nuclear weapons. In an interview with PI, Wolfsthal said the Nuclear Crisis Group has been speaking to members on the Hill, as well as to the State Department and to the White House, about strategies the United States could use to reduce the likelihood of nuclear conflict. "Right now, the U.S. government in many ways is flying blind, and we're trying to provide them with some insight of what's going on," Wolfsthal said. He added that the group does not lobby on specific legislation but instead is "available regardless of party or affiliation to try to give [government officials] insight."

TRUMP ALLY WAS IN NEGOTIATIONS TO EARN MILLIONS IF DOJ DROPPED INVESTIGATION: "A top Republican fundraiser close to President **Donald Trump** was in negotiations to earn tens of millions of dollars if the U.S. Justice Department dropped its investigation into a multibillion-dollar graft scandal involving a Malaysian state investment fund,

according to emails reviewed by **The Wall Street Journal**," the Journal's **Bradley Hope, Tom Haus** and **Rebecca Ballhaus** report. "In emails dated during the past year, **Elliott Broidy**, a venture capitalist and a longtime Republican donor, and his wife, **Robin Rosenzweig**, an attorney, discuss setting up a consulting contract with **Jho Low**, the Malaysian businessman at the center of the 1Malaysia Development Bhd. scandal, which brought scrutiny to the country's prime minister, Najib Razak. The messages include draft agreements between Ms. Rosenzweig's California law firm and representatives of Mr. Low about the possible terms of their business engagement. In one draft, there is a proposal that includes a \$75 million fee if the Justice Department quickly drops its investigation.

- "Along with the contract drafts, the emails also appear to show Mr. Broidy prepared talking points for Malaysia's prime minister ahead of a 2017 visit to Washington that included a meeting with Mr. Trump and other officials. In the talking points, the prime minister was advised to state that Malaysia wanted to emphasize its work with the U.S. in confronting North Korea, while also arguing against the U.S. legal pursuit of the 1MDB matter. It isn't clear what, if anything, came of the talking points." [Full story.](#)

BANKING GROUPS HIT BACK AT NRF: "A coalition of financial services organizations rebutted an advertising campaign launched this week by the **National Retail Federation** contending that any data breach notification bill should apply equally to all industries," **POLITICO's Tim Starks** [reports](#). "The financial industries groups contend that there are already rules in place for their sector. 'Contrary to statements made recently by some retailer groups, banks and credit unions have long been subject to regulatory mandates that set rigorous data protection and breach notification practices for financial institutions to follow,' the groups wrote in a letter to House Speaker [Paul Ryan](#) and Minority Leader [Nancy Pelosi](#). 'In fact, federal regulators describe these notification obligations as "an affirmative duty" for which compliance is demanded, and are considered to be an element of fundamental Safety and Soundness for the overall banking system.' The letter was signed by the **American Bankers Association, Consumer Bankers Association, Credit Union National Association, Financial Services Roundtable, Independent Community Bankers of America, National Association of Federally Insured Credit Unions and Clearing House Association.**"

JOBS REPORT

- **Eric Branstad** is joining Mercury as a managing director and will [launch](#) a Des Moines office for the firm.

SPOTTED: At a reception celebrating the opening of a new **Samsung** plant in South Carolina at Succotash on Wednesday night, according to a PI tipster: Rep. [Michael McCaul](#) (R-Texas); **David Steel**, Samsung's new executive vice president of corporate affairs; **Julie Kearney** and **Jennifer Taylor** of the **Consumer Technology Association**; **Marc DeCoursey** of the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation**; **Tom Power** of **CTIA**; **Joe McGuire** of the **Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers**; **Austin Carson** of **TechFreedom**; **Rhonda Foxx** of Rep. [Alma Adams](#)' office; **John Eunice** of Sen. [David Perdue](#)'s office; **Yebbie Watkins** of Rep. [Jim Clyburn](#)'s office; **Virgil Miller** of Rep. [Cedric Richmond](#)'s office; **Scott Cunningham** of Rep. [Kenny Marchant](#)'s office; **Keith Castaldo** of Sen. [Kirsten Gillibrand](#)'s office; **Arthur Sidney**

of Rep. **Hank Johnson**'s office; former Sen. **Tim Hutchinson** (R-Ark.), now a lobbyist at **Greenberg Traurig**; **Erskine Wells** of **BGR Group**; and **Kevin O'Neill** of **Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer**.

- At Union Station on Tuesday night for a **National Association of Broadcasters** reception ahead of the group's fly-in this week, according to a PI tipster: House Minority Whip **Steny Hoyer**; Sens. **John Thune** (R-S.D.), **Ron Wyden** (D-Ore.), **Jim Inhofe** (R-Okla.) and **Tina Smith** (D-Minn.); Reps. **Jim Jordan** (R-Ohio), **Bill Johnson** (R-Ohio), **Debbie Dingell** (D-Mich.), **Lamar Smith** (R-Texas), **Steve Chabot** (R-Ohio), **Raul Ruiz** (D-Calif.), **Mark Sanford** (R-S.C.), **Karen Handel** (R-Ga.), **Josh Gottheimer** (D-N.J.), **Jason Lewis** (R-Minn.), **Ron Estes** (R-Kan.), **John Curtis** (R-Utah), **Brad Sherman** (D-Calif.), **Drew Ferguson** (R-Ga.), **Ryan Costello** (R-Pa.), **Darrell Issa** (R-Calif.) and **Blake Farenthold** (R-Texas).

- At the opening of **Mylan**'s new offices on North Capitol Street on Tuesday, according to a PI tipster: Reps. **Darrell Issa** (R-Calif.), **Sean Duffy** (R-Wis.) and **Karen Handel** (R-Ga.); **Scott Melville** of the **Consumer Healthcare Products Association**; **Puneet Kundal** of the Indian Embassy; **Ivonn Szeverényi**, the wife of Hungary's ambassador to the U.S., **László Szabó**; **Chip Davis** of the **Association for Accessible Medicines**; **Sally Greenberg** of the **National Consumers League**; **Ken Mendez** of the **Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America**; **Lisa Rickard** of the **U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform**; **Sam Geduldig** of **CGCN Group**; **Ashley Davis** and **Kristi Remington** of **West Front Strategies**; **Stacey Rampy** and **Steve Northrup** of **RampyNorthrup**; **Cristina Antelo** of **Ferox Strategies**; **Marcus Mason** of the **Madison Group**; and **Heather Bresch**, **Robert Coury**, **Rajiv Malik**, **Tony Mauro** and **Ken Parks** of **Mylan**.

- The first reader to email us identifying the members who hit two parties will win a fabulous prize.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Bredesen Victory Fund (Bredesen for Senate, Tennessee Democratic Party)

NEW PACs:

Autism Hear Us Now LLC (super PAC)
Defend Democracy (super PAC)
Great Again Political Action (PAC)
Mississippi Victory Fund (super PAC)
Restore Integrity (super PAC)
StrongND PAC (super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Capitol Hill Policy Group LLC: Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Capitol Hill Policy Group LLC: Nooksack Indian Tribe
Castro & Co., LLC: CryptoSecurities Exchange LLC

David R. Graves Company: Williams & Jensen, PLLC
Miller & Chevalier, Chtd: The Wonderful Company LLC
The Summerill Group LLC: Livingston County Sheriff's Office

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Windstream Corporation: Windstream Corporation
Wexler | Walker, a unit of Hill+Knowlton Strategies, LLC: Pershing Square Capital
Management, L.P.
Invariant LLC: Coalition for Patient Vision Care Safety

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2018/03/01/boeing-names-new-executive-vp-of-government-operations-251823>

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 9/5/2017 10:28:40 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise: HARVEY relief coming this week, debt ceiling could be attached -- TRUMP'S TEST: Time to cut deals -- Framing the DACA debate -- POLITICO 50 out today -- LOUISE LINTON speaks -- B'DAY: April Ryan

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Hewlett Packard Enterprise

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

FACT CHECK: TRUE -- @realDonaldTrump at 10:49 p.m.: "Big week coming up!"

Good Tuesday morning and welcome back! **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: HARVEY AID EDITION** -- House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) visited Texas over the weekend, and announced that the House would begin considering a Harvey aid package Wednesday morning. Despite the Trump administration's preference, the package that begins in the House will not include lifting the debt limit, according to people briefed on the legislation. That's not to say the Senate won't slap it on and send it back to the House, which many aides expect to happen. You will hear a lot in the coming days about some opposition on the right to a Harvey disaster relief and debt ceiling package. Remember this: support for a deal like that would be broad and bipartisan.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTS DOWN in 26 days unless Congress passes a funding bill.

THE BIG PICTURE -- NEWS ANALYSIS from **PETER BAKER** on A1 of the NYT: **"Trump Faces Deal-Making Challenges as Congress Returns":** "Donald J. Trump the deal maker heads into the autumn of his first year in as weak a negotiating position as any president in modern times - desperate for a victory yet hardly near consensus on any major priority, still able to dominate the national conversation but so far incapable of translating that into action.

"A summer of tumult marked by staff shake-ups , legislative failures, intraparty feuds, a racially inflammatory controversy and a nuclear-edged war of words has left him at odds with his own Republican Party and supported by barely a third of the American public. The list of daunting challenges has only grown with little sense of how

he plans to tackle them beyond Twitter storms and declarations of determination.

"As Congress returns to town on Tuesday , the president faces weeks of hard negotiations to overhaul the tax code, raise the debt ceiling, keep the government open, finance his border wall, and secure relief and reconstruction money for areas devastated by Hurricane Harvey. On top of that, he plans to throw another polarizing issue on the docket by threatening to scrap President Barack Obama's program allowing younger illegal immigrants to stay in the country unless Congress acts to save it within six months." <http://nyti.ms/2vGDFAI>

TRUMP'S DACA DECISION MATRIX ...

-- **"Both sides gear up for political fight as Trump prepares to end immigration protections for 'dreamers',"** by WaPo's David Nakamura: "Lawmakers and advocates on both sides began to stake out positions Monday for an extended public fight over whether Congress should provide legal status to young undocumented immigrants known as 'dreamers' as President Trump is preparing to rescind Obama-era protections for them.

"Moderate congressional Republicans, and even some conservatives , suggested that they are open to crafting a legislative deal that could offer permanent legal status to hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have been in the country illegally since they were children. Democrats lambasted Trump for his expected decision and called on the GOP to join them to protect the dreamers. ...

"Trump's decision to include a six-month delay could be a bid to shift some of the political pressure and consequences over the dreamers onto congressional Republicans. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.), Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (Utah) and several other GOP leaders have urged Trump not to end the program and to let Congress pursue its own course of action." <http://wapo.st/2xLk13h>

-- **"On DACA, President Trump Has No Easy Path,"** by NYT's Glenn Thrush, Maggie Haberman and Julie Hirschfeld Davis: "For months, an anxious and uncertain President Trump was caught between opposing camps in the West Wing prodding him to either scrap or salvage an Obama-era program allowing undocumented immigrants brought to the country as minors to remain in the United States. Last week, with a key court deadline looming for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, Mr. Trump, exasperated, asked his aides for 'a way out' of a dilemma he created by promising to roll back the program as a presidential candidate, according to two people familiar with the exchange. Mr. Trump's chief of staff, John F. Kelly, who had wrestled with crafting a compromise in his previous job as the president's homeland security secretary, began consulting with Republican lawmakers and staff members for a quick fix, according to three officials familiar with the situation.

"He finally arrived at an inelegant solution to an intractable problem: Delaying a decision on the final fate of about 800,000 'Dreamers' covered by President Barack

Obama's executive action for six months, and putting it on Congress to come up with a legislative solution to the problem. Congressional Republicans expect the administration to unveil some version of this stopgap solution on Tuesday, but Mr. Trump will not make the announcement himself. Instead, Attorney General Jeff Sessions will handle it at an 11 a.m. briefing. He will not take questions from reporters." <http://nyti.ms/2gAoQol>

--INTERESTING NUGGET: "[T]he moderates in Mr. Trump's midst, [Gary] Cohn in particular, are somewhat less influential these days, after several expressed their disgust at the president's response to the racial riots in Charlottesville, Va., last month."

-- "Trump's punt to Congress on DACA threatens new GOP rift," by Seung Min Kim and Rachael Bade: "[S]ome Republicans such as conservative Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas are openly floating trade-offs to protect DACA recipients, even as Democrats insist that Dreamers aren't bargaining chips for tougher immigration restrictions. In the House, senior Republicans still believe there's a possible deal to be struck with Democrats: codifying DACA in return for Trump's sought-after border wall. ... One plugged-in immigration advocate predicted a '30-70 chance' that Congress successfully passes legislation that would essentially codify DACA ... into law." <http://politi.co/2ezQnWq>

BEN SMITH: "Why Does Trump Always Shoot The Hostages?: The president prepares to throw DREAMers' lives into chaos, his political goals unknown" <http://bzfd.it/2gBo8Ho>

THE WAY OUT, according to GOP leadership insiders we spoke to: a deal which reinstates DACA in some form, and beefs up security on the border with Mexico. This is something that many Republicans and most Democrats could live with.

A QUESTION FOR DEMOCRATS -- Will Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi start trying to attach the reinstatement of DACA to must-pass legislation like disaster relief funding for Harvey or funding the government?

-- FROM OUR FRIENDS AT POLITICO PRO: "Speaking of legislation - passing it is complicated. Luckily for you, we've got an easy-to-understand infographic that explains the entire process." ***Download POLITICO Pro's Guide to Legislation*** <http://politi.co/2xLy0X2>

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise :** How are Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers helping create the future in science, medicine and national security? Learn more: hpe.com/supercomputing *****

GREAT ANECDOTE -- WSJ's Mike Bender and Kristina Peterson: "The relationship between the White House and congressional Republicans began to fray before the August recess, as the Senate struggled to overhaul the health-care law. [Mitch] McConnell, a fastidious, 30-year veteran of the Senate, often prepared note cards with points he wanted to make during phone calls with the president. Mr. Trump was more

casual, starting conversations with several minutes of chatter about the day's headlines or what he had seen on TV, the kind of banter he used as a businessman with VIPs ...

"As it became clear Mr. McConnell couldn't summon enough Republican votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the Senate majority leader stopped responding to the president's chitchat ... 'Mitch?' the president said when Mr. McConnell fell silent in one call. 'Are you there?' Mr. McConnell waited a beat, then responded. 'Yes, Mr. President. Back to the bill.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2xL4ukh>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- TRUMP has a National Security Council briefing at 10 a.m. At 1:30 p.m., he will meet with the National Economic Council. At 4 p.m., Trump meets with the Big Six -- the top negotiators on tax reform. At 5:45 p.m., he will speak to Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on the phone.

AP'S JOE MCDONALD in Beijing: **"China has tools to pressure Kim but worries of consequences"**: "Though China has long been the North's main trading partner and diplomatic protector, Kim's nuclear and missile tests have alienated Chinese leaders, who supported last month's U.N. sanctions that slash North Korean revenue by banning sales of coal and iron ore. President Donald Trump and others have called on China to use its leverage to do more to halt the North's nuclear development.

"Beijing tried to head off the latest nuclear test , conducted Sunday, by warning Pyongyang that such an event would lead to even more painful penalties. Still, Chinese leaders worry about instability on the Korean Peninsula if Kim's regime collapses, which would eliminate a buffer between China and South Korea, a heavily armed U.S. ally with American troops on its soil." <http://bit.ly/2gBioxv>

W.H. REVOLVING DOOR -- "Spicer lands post-White House gig," by Annie Karni: "Sean Spicer is cashing in on 'candor.' President Donald Trump's first press secretary ... has signed with Worldwide Speakers Group, the company confirmed to POLITICO. 'Audiences around the world will benefit from the same candor, wit and insight that Spicer brought to the White House briefing room,' Worldwide Speakers Group writes about Spicer in its pitch to potential customers, an early copy of which was reviewed by POLITICO. ...

"His first paid speaking gig will be in New York City on Sept. 11, at the annual conference of the investment bank Rodman & Renshaw ... [H]e is also planning to pitch a book proposal and his agent, Robert Barnett, as of last week was making the rounds to networks to negotiate a possible deal for his client. So far, he has yet to nail down a paid television talking-head gig." <http://politi.co/2eY6bDc>

THE ADMINISTRATION -- "EPA now requires political aide's sign-off for agency awards, grant applications," by WaPo's Juliet Eilperin: "The Environmental Protection Agency has taken the unusual step of putting a political operative in charge of vetting the hundreds of millions of dollars in grants the EPA distributes annually, assigning final funding decisions to a former Trump campaign aide with little environmental policy

experience.

"In this role, John Konkus reviews every award the agency gives out, along with every grant solicitation before it is issued. According to both career and political employees, Konkus has told staff that he is on the lookout for 'the double C-word' -- climate change -- and repeatedly has instructed grant officers to eliminate references to the subject in solicitations.

"Konkus, who officially works in the EPA's public affairs office , has canceled close to \$2 million competitively awarded to universities and nonprofit organizations. Although his review has primarily affected Obama administration priorities, it is the heavily Republican state of Alaska that has undergone the most scrutiny so far."

<http://wapo.st/2xLsFPw>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Putin: Russia may order U.S. to cut further its diplomatic staff in Moscow" -- Reuters/Xiamen, China: "Russia reserves the right to further reduce the number of U.S. diplomatic staff in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday, adding that Moscow would not do that for now. Reacting to what he called Washington's 'boorish and unprecedented' actions towards Russia's diplomatic facilities in the United States, Putin said he would order the Foreign Ministry to take the U.S. authorities to court over violation of Russia's property rights. ...

"The only thing is that it was done in such a clearly boorish manner. That does not reflect well on our American partners. But it's difficult to conduct a dialogue with people who confuse Austria and Australia. Nothing can be done about it. Probably such is the level of political culture of a certain part of the U.S. establishment."

<http://reut.rs/2wDRHQy>

WHAT BANNON AND BOYLE ARE READING -- "Breitbart bangs the drum in Alabama Senate showdown," by Alex Isenstadt: "Conservatives led by Breitbart News are waging an all-out campaign to stop a candidate backed by Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell in the Alabama Senate special election - putting growing pressure on the president to step away from his endorsement. With just over three weeks until the runoff, far-right forces are starting to close ranks around former state Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore, an evangelical bomb-thrower who famously defied a federal order to remove a monument of the Ten Commandments from a state building. And they're looking to persuade Trump not to campaign for Moore's rival, incumbent Sen. Luther Strange. ...

"The pro-Moore effort will intensify this week, when the candidate arrives in Washington to hold a procession of meetings with influential conservatives that he hopes will culminate in endorsements. Among those Moore is slated to huddle with: members of the House Freedom Caucus and former diplomat and presidential candidate Alan Keyes, who is hosting a Wednesday evening fundraising reception. Attendees are being asked to give up to \$2,700, according to an invitation. Steve Bannon is helping to orchestrate the push. ... Bannon, who returned to Breitbart last

month after leaving the White House, has dispatched one of his favorite writers, Matt Boyle, to Alabama." <http://politi.co/2x6V6ud>

-- BOYLE in Montgomery, Alabama: "Exclusive - Judge Roy Moore Embodies Jeff Sessions: 'I Think I Would Have the Same Opinion' on Immigration, Trade":

"Moore's embrace of Sessions, and his brand of economic nationalism that he shares with the president, is a key recipe for electoral success in Alabama: Sessions is so popular in Alabama he was reelected last time unanimously as he drew no opponent in either his primary or his general election." <http://bit.ly/2gl7Ssb>

IN JERUSALEM -- "Sara Netanyahu Expected to Be Indicted for Fraud in

Pocketing \$110,000 in Goods," by Haaretz's Gidi Weitz: "Sara Netanyahu is expected to be indicted, pending a hearing, on charges of fraudulently receiving items worth 400,000 shekels (\$111,851), Haaretz has learned. Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit is expected to inform Netanyahu, wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, of the charges against her in a few weeks. Sara Netanyahu is suspected of ordering chef's meals at the prime minister's official residence, which is against regulations, and concealing the fact that she did so. She and her husband have accused the former chief caretaker of the official residence, Meni Naftali, who is currently leading protests against the prime minister, of inflating the residence's expenses." <http://bit.ly/2xKhpmh>

THE 2017 POLITICO 50 UNVEILED TODAY -- The fourth annual POLITICO 50 list maps out the new American landscape of ideas and introduces the people who can see past the disruption of Trump to a future in which politics, technology and new social currents will transform our country into something most of us have yet to imagine. The top 5 -- 1. Former White House strategist Steve Bannon (<http://politi.co/2wCFpb2>) ... 2. Trump opposition leaders Leah Greenberg and Ezra Levin (<http://politi.co/2vGlsTf>) ... 3. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch (<http://politi.co/2wCcS5b>) ... 4. Steve Case (<http://politi.co/2xLe5HF>) ... 5. Former acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates (<http://politi.co/2x5XC3G>). **See the full list** <http://politi.co/2eYbTVv>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, a Hyunmoo II ballistic missile is fired during an exercise at an undisclosed location in South Korea on Sept. 4. The released live weapons "accurately struck" a target in the sea off the country's eastern coast, the country's military officials said. | South Korea Defense Ministry via AP

NEW ISAAC DOVERE PODCAST -- "Dolores Huerta, the famed labor leader who marched with Cesar Chavez and coined his rallying cry, is still mad as hell-and she laid it all out for Isaac Doveré in the latest episode of the Off Message podcast talking about the DACA decision and the policy around contract laborers. 'This is a step up above

slavery,' Huerta, now 87, said. 'The Republican plan is to deport all of the people that you have here that are undocumented, and bring in folks here under foreign labor contracts.' And all the while, Huerta says, Trump and other wealthy people like him benefit more than anybody from the sweat of immigrant labor.

"I think it's mean. I think that he's got this obsession, a fixation, against people of color. You know, the way that he keeps attacking Mexicans,' she says. 'I'm a Mexican American. And my great-grandparents were here before his were, I'm sure. And his grandfather came from Germany.' **Plus:** her memories of walking onto stage with Bobby Kennedy the night he was shot (and why she still blames herself a little) and of the night she came up with Si Se Puede." <http://politi.co/2eYlqfb>

APOLOGY -- COVER DU JOUR - LOUISE LINTON on the cover of Washington Life's September issue, in which she poses in evening gowns for the magazine's "Balls & Galas" issue and apologizes for her Instagram post in a Q&A with Virginia Coyne - "I want to say I concede completely to the comments of my critics. My post itself and the following response were indefensible. Period. I don't have any excuses, nor do I feel any self-pity for the backlash I experienced. ... It's clear that I was the one who was truly out of touch and my response was reactionary and condescending. I wish I hadn't spoken in such a patronizing tone. It was an out of character, knee-jerk reaction, and I felt so awful about it that I removed it. ...

"I one hundred percent embrace the comments of my critics and I concede wholeheartedly that the post was boastful and materialistic and my response was extremely thoughtless. I should have known better than to be so insensitive." ... **Q:** "Did you feel the criticism was overblown?" **LINTON:** "No. I feel like I deserved the criticism". ... **Q:** "So, the social media Louise is not the real Louise?" **LINTON:** "The social media Louise of that week was not me. I should have stuck to posting pictures of rescue dogs and daily life." **Q&A** <http://bit.ly/2ezxVNX> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2wAD1TN>

VALLEY TALK -- RECODE'S TONY ROMM: "Reid Hoffman has billions of dollars and one of the best networks in Silicon Valley. Here's how he's using them to take on Trump: Inside the tech mogul's 2017 political playbook for funding candidates, causes and companies": "Hoffman is eager to open his checkbook for state and federal office-seekers, including for critical races in Virginia. There, he's already spent millions of dollars and tapped staff on the ground to study the state's local elections, hoping to fund get-out-the-vote initiatives and other ideas that might work elsewhere in the country - all the while nudging its Republican-dominated legislature in the direction of Democrats." <http://bit.ly/2iXBja8>

******* A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise:** A nation's strength is increasingly measured by its technical prowess. As the designer and builder of more supercomputers than any other company in the world, Hewlett Packard Enterprise is proud to lead the way in one of the future's most important technologies. Visit hpe.com/supercomputing to learn more about how Hewlett Packard Enterprise's supercomputers are helping create the future in science, medicine and national security.

HAPPENING TODAY -- UN Ambassador Nikki Haley is speaking at AEI this morning at 11 a.m. with the speech titled "Beyond the echo chamber: Considerations on U.S. policy toward Iran". **Livestream** <http://bit.ly/2xKMAOt>

UNDERSTANDING KIM -- "**Motives of North Korea's Leader Baffle Americans and Allies**," by NYT's Motoko Rich and David E. Sanger: "[S]ix years after Mr. Kim took power and began executing those who challenged his rule - sometimes with an antiaircraft gun - there is no issue that confounds analysts more than the motives of a 33-year-old dictator whose every move seems one part canny strategy, one part self-preservation, and one part nuclear narcissism. ... [I]nside the Trump administration, many have begun to question the long-held assumption that his nuclear buildup is essentially defensive, an effort to keep the United States and its allies from finding the right moment to try to overthrow him. Mr. Kim's real goal may be blackmail, they argue - the sort that would be possible as soon as North Korea can put Los Angeles or Chicago or New York at risk." <http://nyti.ms/2eXrQLz>

MEDIAWATCH -- "**The Daily News, a Distinctive Voice in New York, Is Sold**," by NYT's Sydney Ember and Andrew Ross Sorkin: "The deal represents the end of an era for The News, which was long a voice for New York's working class. It may also signal the end of the political influence of its owner, the real estate magnate Mortimer B. Zuckerman, who often used the paper's bold, front-page headline -- known as 'the wood' -- for commentary about candidates and politicians, locally and nationally. ...

"[T]he **Chicago Tribune** reported on Monday that Tronc purchased The News for just \$1, plus the assumption of liabilities. ... Under the terms of the deal, Tronc assumes control of The News's operations, its printing plant in Jersey City and its pension liability. Tronc will also receive a 49.9 percent interest in the 25-acre property overlooking Manhattan where the printing plant is. It was not immediately clear what The News's pension liabilities were; however, previous reports indicated that they were worth more than \$30 million." <http://nyti.ms/2wDomWd>

-- **TIM O'BRIEN**, executive editor of Bloomberg View and Gadfly, has been named a contributor to NBC and MSNBC.

-- **NEW POLITICO HIRE** -- Joe Schatz and Reid Pillifant email the states staff: "Alexandra Glorioso will be joining POLITICO's Tallahassee bureau as a policy and politics reporter covering the regulated industry beat, including medical marijuana and gambling -- an increasingly important coverage area for us in Florida. Alex comes to us from the Naples Daily News, where she's spent the last year and a half working as a political reporter."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Tim Geithner on Monday at the airport in Athens, Greece ... Sarah Huckabee Sanders at the zoo Monday morning with her kids ... House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and her family having brunch Sunday at The Spotted Pig on West 11th Street in New York ... Juliet Eilperin, Andrew Light and family on the pool deck in the freeze dance contest at Congressional Country Club. Norah O'Donnell, Chef Geoff Tracy and family in the belly flop competition.

-- **Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta** with Anheuser-Busch President and CEO João Castro Neves on Monday at the Anheuser-Busch brewery in Cartersville, Georgia to thank Anheuser-Busch employees who have helped the victims of Hurricane Harvey -- **pic** <http://bit.ly/2wDwDth>

TRANSITIONS -- OBAMA ALUMNI -- Sabrina Siddiqui is joining FTP Public Affairs. She is an alum of Obama Treasury, the offices of Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa) and the DCCC. ... **Kelly Magsamen**, former principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, is joining the Center for American Progress as the VP for national security and international policy.

-- **FORMER CIA DIRECTOR JOHN BRENNAN** has been named a distinguished fellow for global security at Fordham law school's Center on National Security. <http://nyti.ms/2wAtUm2>

-- **Katharine Cooksey** is starting today at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as manager of media and external comms. **Carah Goldoust**, who previously worked on special events and protocol for Speaker Paul Ryan, today takes over Cooksey's role as deputy press secretary at the House Ways and Means Committee.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Kamyi Bazbaz, partner at consulting firm Pramana Collective and former press secretary to Chelsea Clinton, got married Saturday to **Lucie Steinberg**, a PhD candidate in American Studies at Harvard, on Serifos Island in Greece, in front of a small group of family and friends. "We met through my good friend Matt Mittenthal, who went to grade and high school with Lucie in NYC, and I met in 2005 when we were both interns in Sen. [Chuck] Schumer's office (along with Teddy Goff). So Schumer is allowed at least partial credit for this marriage!" **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2x77MBI> ... <http://bit.ly/2wAZK1W> **SPOTTED:** Teddy Goff, Genevieve Roth, Chloe Malle and Perrin Ireland.

--**Devan Barber**, political director at End Citizens United, and **Perrin Cooke**, who returns to Covington and Burling as an associate next month, were married Sunday night at Fathom Gallery on 14th St in D.C. "Friend of the couple Sadie Weiner officiated. Great crew of former DSCC, Hagan, and DNC/Obama alum were there. The party continued at Kingfisher!" **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2iXAw9a> ... <http://bit.ly/2w1cmMb> ... <http://bit.ly/2gAPNZd>

SPOTTED: Danielle Friedman, Lauren Passalacqua, Andrew Piatt, Zach Wineburg, Christie Roberts, Dylan Laslovich, Laura Hatafsky, Lanae Erickson, Patrick McHugh, Monica McHugh, Lauren Dillon, Ben Ray, Annette Lee, Stephanie Nielsen, Shaan Gajria, Mike Harney, Helen Hare, Phil Munson, Will Cooke, Ben Harney, Travis Cooke, Dorothy Allen, Fae Jencks.

ENGAGED -- Christopher Quintyne, parliamentary clerk in the Senate Parliamentarian's Office, proposed to **Erica Loewe**, director at the Podesta Group. The couple met in Conference Room E at the Podesta Group in 2013. "We should probably thank Paul Brathwaite for having coffee with me post-law school. Not only did I get great career advice, but I found my future wife. I'd say it was a productive meeting." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2vGdWYx>

-- OBAMA ALUMNI -- Dan Brundage proposed to **Yessenia Miranda** this weekend in Rancho Mirage, California. Brundage is a Navy officer who previously worked in the Obama W.H., Commerce Dept. and 2008 campaign. Miranda is a child behavioral specialist. The couple resides in San Diego with their pup Bean and met at a bar in the city in the fall of 2014. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2gHQEuX> (h/t Dan's sister Amy)

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Maggie Moore, associate at government relations firm Sternhell Group (hat tip: boyfriend Charlie Liebschutz) ... Kelu Chao, who runs VOA's content, produced in 45 languages (h/t John Lippman) ... Matthew Sonneborn, comms director for Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) and SBA comms alum (h/t Sophia Kim) ... Patrick Collins ... Will Taliaferro, partner at GMMB (h/ts Jon Haber)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: April Ryan, WH correspondent and Washington bureau chief for American Urban Radio Networks and a CNN political analyst. **How she got her start in journalism:** "I started in journalism during my freshman year in college at Morgan State University on the local radio station, WEAA-FM. I was a talk show producer and then went on to do news reporting and anchoring at other radio stations. But for a short stint during freshman year, simultaneously I was a radio jazz DJ on WEAA spinning records between classes on Fridays and on Sunday nights. Journalism won." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2iYNfbR>

BIRTHDAYS: Brian Wolff, EVP for public policy and external affairs at Edison Electric Institute ... Holly Rosenkrantz ... Sean McNabb (h/t Courto) ... former Fed chair Paul Volcker ... former Sen. John Danforth (R-Mo.) ... Clay Risen, deputy editor at the NYT op-ed page ... Anne Marie Hoffman, principal at the Harbour Group and an RNC alum ... Ted Greenberg ... Matthew Vail, a George W. Bush and Rick Scott alum ... David Fauvre, counsel at Arnold & Porter ... CBS News transportation correspondent Kris Van Cleave ... Hamilton Fish, publisher of The New Republic ... Hans Riemer ... Mike Castaldo ... Iris Weinshall ... Issa alum Dale Neugebauer ... Katie Weiss ... Abby McIntyre ... Noam Lee, DGA's national finance director ... Anita Huslin ... Bonnie Wood ... Politico's Aaron Lorenzo ... Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) ... Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH) ... Politico's Erica Donovan (h/t Meredith McPhillips) ...

... **journalist Stephanie Green** ... WSJ reporter Ted Mann ... Catherine Reynolds, CBS News Capitol Hill producer, celebrating with a big Clemson Tiger win over the weekend (h/t her Capitol Hill girls) ... Gabrielle Tarbert, the pride of Harford County, Maryland, is 26. She celebrated this weekend in Chicago with friends (h/t Rachel Wein) ... Jeremy Furchtgott of Baron Public Affairs (h/t sister Diana) ... Zoe Heilicz, staff assistant for Rep. Barry Loudermilk (h/t brother Jordan) ... Melissa Sowerwine, VP of operations at Red Six Solutions ... Rob Lehman ... Terri Hasdorff ... Matthew Allen ... Courtney Neale ... Francis Nelms ... Jason Spear ... Erin Reif ... Enrique Padron ... Annie Nguyen ... John Burmaster ... Jessica Mejia (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Anne Marie Frawley ... Kum Kang ... Ed Talbot ... Cheche Mozingo ... Bob Newhart ... Raquel Welch ... movie director Werner Herzog is 75 (h/t Nadia Szold) ... Michael Keaton (h/t AP)

***** **A message from Hewlett Packard Enterprise** : To super compete, America must super compute. Supercomputing is key to future breakthroughs in medicine, science and manufacturing. As the designer and builder of more supercomputers than any other company in the world, Hewlett Packard Enterprise is helping America increase its competitive edge in not only today's economy, but tomorrow's. Visit hpe.com/supercomputing to learn more about how HPE supercomputers help America compete. *****

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 6/21/2017 10:49:42 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Starbucks: GOP VICTORY LAP after Handel win -- HOUSE GOP now 4-0 in contested specials since Trump won -- UBER's KALANICK IS OUT -- CAROL LEE to NBC -- CHINESE EMBASSY shopping for new PR firm -- SPOTTED at U2 concert

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Starbucks
06/21/2017 06:46 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning and happy first day of summer. **THE FACTS -- KAREN HANDEL** quite easily beat **JON OSSOFF** in Georgia. House Republicans are now 4-0 in contested special elections since **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** won the presidency. That means Democrats have failed -- despite millions of dollars in spending -- to win a single race with a president who has a record low approval rating. Democrats are even further from the majority than they thought. Let's be clear: something ain't working for Democrats, party insiders privately tell us. The Ossoff race galvanized national donors and activists in a way that led many to believe House Democrats were en route to wresting control of the chamber from Republicans. That's not how they feel this morning. Caveat: this is a Republican seat. Being close is nice. But after six years in the minority, that's about all it is.

-- **REP. SETH MOULTON (D-MASS.) (@sethmoulton)**: "#Ossof Race better be a wakeup call for Democrats - business as usual isn't working. Time to stop rehashing 2016 and talk about the future." ... "We need a genuinely new message, a serious jobs plan that reaches all Americans, and a bigger tent not a smaller one. Focus on the future".

-- **THE DCCC** is holding a Georgia-6 debrief and consultant call at 1 p.m. today.

NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN STEVE STIVERS (R-OHIO), the guy that some Republicans were sniping at a month ago, has run through the tape in Montana, South Carolina, Georgia and Kansas with four victories.

-- **STIVERS SENT US THIS TEXT MESSAGE** after the victory was announced:
"Despite 30 mil spent and all the Democrat bluster, Republicans never took their eyes off the horizon. We were consistent focused on the issues and data that mattered and the results speak for themselves. Moral victories don't get a vote in Congress." **Rachael Bade on Stivers** <http://politi.co/2rPV9lp>

SURE , all these districts are GOP held seats, and Republicans just squeaked by. Fair enough. But if Democrats want to win the majority, they need to knock off some Republicans -- actually, lots of them. **REMEMBER THIS:** In 2011, Democrats flipped a GOP-held House seat in upstate New York -- so it's not unheard of for them to win these races. They just haven't done it in a long, long time.

THERE IS A LOT OF BUZZ that this will help ease the passage of Trump's agenda. Eh, kind of. The same fissures still exist within the GOP on issues like tax reform, health care and big government spending.

GABE DEBENEDETTI , who was at Handel HQ in Atlanta and also dropped by Ossoff's election night event, sent us his takeaways: "Heading into the night, Democrats figured even a close loss would lead to a narrative about the party over-performing in GOP-heavy districts. That much is definitely true, but the recriminations started earlier than expected when Archie Parnell came closer than anyone anticipated in South Carolina's Fifth District earlier in the night.

"**There were some awkward moments** for Republicans on Tuesday even at Handel's party -- a blue blazer-and-khakis crowd with a few MAGA hats and Bikers For Trump t-shirts scattered in -- especially when she thanked the president without using his name. But no amount of GOP discomfort or polling numbers showing a nationwide swing to blue was enough to calm frustrated Dems.

"**To Bernie-aligned progressives** I've spoken with, the Ossoff loss was evidence that candidates need to be more liberal, more outspoken on economic populism. Others wondered why the party didn't spend much money at all in Parnell's race. But one Dem congressman texted me a question that summed up all the exasperation early in the night: 'Lots of 'moral victories.' But when do we get actual victories???"

-- **MORE DEBENEDETTI: "Lessons from the 2017 elections":** <http://politi.co/2rTte5K>

NYT's JONATHAN MARTIN and RICHARD FAUSSET: "The apparent success of relentless Republican attacks linking Mr. Ossoff to the House minority leader, Nancy Pelosi, and her 'San Francisco values' also affirmed the efficacy of tying Democratic candidates in conservative districts to their brethren in more liberal parts of the country.

...

"**Both parties now confront the same question:** What does such a hard-won victory in the Lululemon-and-loafers subdivisions of Dunwoody and Roswell, where Mr. Trump prevailed in November, augur for Republicans who next year will be defending an array

of less conservative seats outside the South?" <http://nyti.ms/2tMxGEr>

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES at 11:48 p.m.: "Well, the Special Elections are over and those that want to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN are 5 and O! All the Fake News, all the money spent = 0" ... **KELLYANNE CONWAY (@kellyannepolls):** "Thanks to everyone who breathlessly and snarkily proclaimed #GA06 as a 'referendum on POTUS @realDonaldTrump'. You were right. #winning" ... "Laughing my #Ossoff"

-- **WAIT A SECOND, GUYS.** Republicans did spend tens of millions of dollars to defend these seats and they won't be able to do that everywhere in November 2018. We're not saying Republicans will lose the majority, just pointing out a touch of nuance here.

RAHM EMANUEL and BRUCE REED in The Atlantic, "How the Democrats Can Take Back Congress": The party needs "to recruit candidates who match their districts and offer voters a detailed agenda ... Democrats don't need to spend the next year navel-gazing over how to motivate their base. In 2018, Trump will provide the greatest fundraising and get-out-the-vote machine the party has ever had. Wave elections are a chance to build on that base by winning back voters disappointed in the other side. Democrats will have plenty of disappointments to bring to their attention, including Republican health-care and tax-cut plans that betray the working-class voters who put Trump in the White House. To pull that off, though, Democrats must channel their anger, not be defined by it." <http://theatlantic.com/2rBsUcs>

THE RUSSIA PROBE CONTINUES ... "Mueller meets with 2 House Intel members," by Kyle Cheney: "Members of the House intelligence committee huddled Tuesday with Robert Mueller - the special counsel probing Russian interference in the 2016 election - to ensure their parallel investigations don't conflict with one another. Reps. Mike Conaway (R-Texas) and Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), the two lawmakers leading the House's probe into the matter, huddled with Mueller in a secure Capitol conference room to begin setting parameters. 'We are setting up a system to deconflict,' Conaway said shortly after the meeting." <http://politi.co/2rQ0AqN>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Starbucks is creating opportunities for young adults facing barriers to success, including 4.9 million young Americans who are not working or in school. We've hired 40,000 young men and women and expanded our goal to 100,000 hires by 2020. We're also making it easier to access a tuition-free college degree: <http://sbux.co/2s2gX2g> *****

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Fate of Obamacare repeal uncertain in Senate," by Burgess Everett and Jen Haberkorn: "Senate Republicans are planning a pivotal meeting for Thursday morning to start the whipping process for Obamacare repeal, according to two sources familiar with the process. Mitch McConnell's current whip count to repeal Obamacare is far short of 50 votes. There is still no bill, and even Republicans are moaning about the rush and lack of transparency.

"The GOP plan to jam through a bill over the next 10 days amounts to a rare political risk by McConnell with no guarantee of success -- and one that could jeopardize his Senate majority long-term if the bill ends up being viewed as poorly as the House-passed bill, which has a 17 percent approval rating. McConnell himself wouldn't guarantee passage on Tuesday, or even commit to a vote next week, though that is his plan." <http://politi.co/2rAtUO9>

-- **KEY SENTENCE:** "Regardless of the outcome, the vote is still planned for next week." ... **NYT: "G.O.P. Rift Over Medicaid and Opioids Imperils Senate Health Bill"** <http://nyti.ms/2rPNWYQ>

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: Opposition to GOP health bill is on the rise," by Steven Shepard: "Opposition to the Republican health bill is growing, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. As the GOP-led Senate prepares to take up the measure, only 35 percent of voters surveyed approve of the bill passed by the House last month. Nearly half of voters, 49 percent, disapprove of the bill. The other 16 percent don't know or don't have an opinion, the poll shows.

"POLITICO/Morning Consult polling indicates the bill has become less popular since the House advanced it in early May. Immediately after the bill passed, slightly more voters approved of the bill, 38 percent. Opposition to the bill was lower, too, immediately after the House passed it: 44 percent.

"The poll underscores the risks Republicans face in pursuing legislation for which opposition is creeping toward a majority of voters. The Senate's so-far behind-closed-doors drafting process also complicates Republicans' efforts to sell the proposal to their own voters - and there's some evidence of slippage among the GOP base on the party's Obamacare repeal bid." <http://politi.co/2sSFtEo>

CH-CH-CH-CH-CHANGES -- "'I'm Right Here!' Sean Spicer Says While Toiling to Find Successor," by NYT's Maggie Haberman and Glenn Thrush: "The biggest shift Mr. Trump is discussing is a dramatic change to the briefing room schedule, including limiting briefings that he has described as a 'spectacle' to once a week and asking reporters to submit written questions. Some of Mr. Trump's outside advisers, including the Fox News host Sean Hannity, have urged him to curtail the freewheeling -- and often embarrassing -- barrage of questions. Mr. Trump has been particularly irked by CNN, and other allies such as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich have suggested banning the cable network. ...

"Several Trump aides, including [Jared] Kushner, Mr. Spicer, Stephen K. Bannon and the chief of staff, Reince Priebus, have made their own phone calls searching for potential job candidates, sometimes not telling others in the building what they're doing. Some believe that the communications director needs his or her own lane; others believe that the person should report to Mr. Spicer, for whom a new role as a deputy chief of staff has been discussed." <http://nyti.ms/2spucda>

VALLEY TALK -- "Uber CEO Travis Kalanick Quits as Investors Revolt Over Scandals," by WSJ's Greg Bensinger: "Uber Technologies Inc.'s co-founder and chief executive, Travis Kalanick, has resigned after a group of investors pressured him to step down following a bruising six months of scandal and setbacks, marking a stunning turnabout for one of Silicon Valley's highest-flying startups. Mr. Kalanick, 40 years old, handed in his resignation Tuesday, a spokesman said. Several investors pushed Mr. Kalanick to resign, people familiar with the matter said, to help turn around the company as it works to battle allegations that it has a workplace permissive of sexual harassment and sexism. Uber has no replacement for Mr. Kalanick and is running without financial and operating chiefs and other key executives after several recent departures, including one of the CEO's top deputies who was pushed out last week by the board."

<http://on.wsj.com/2sUEbZb>

-- **UBER's** C-suite overhaul is likely to have a major impact on K Street. The tech company has been losing a number of in-house Washington employees in recent months. While examining the tech company's D.C. operation and consultant spending is unlikely to be the first thing the next CEO does, it certainly will be high on their list as Congress looks to get more answers from the embattled company.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE ... -- CONGRESSMAN ELECT GREG GIANFORTE -- the man who body slammed Guardian reporter Ben Jacobs, is showing up for his first "Montana Coffee" event this morning on Capitol Hill. Sen. Jon Tester's (D-Mont.) staff plans to wear Committee to Protect Journalists pins to the event to show their support for freedom of the press. Gianforte gave CPJ \$50,000 after being convicted of assaulting Jacobs.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- The Chinese Embassy in Washington is exploring hiring new public relations representation as they navigate Donald Trump's Washington. BLJ Worldwide, a global strategic consulting firm that represents and advises foreign governments, companies and NGOs, is pitching the embassy to do their PR, according to sources familiar with the bid. Qorvis has represented the Chinese embassy since 2014 for \$25,200 a month and is trying to keep them on the books. The firm currently does "public relations, media training, survey and polling, advertising, social media communication strategy and implementation, crisis planning, event planning and management, and reputation and search management," for the embassy, according to a FARA filing.

Representatives of BLJ have been spotted in the Chinese embassy in Washington in recent weeks, according to a source. Mike Holtzman, a partner at the firm, managed the PR campaign for the 2008 Beijing Olympic bid when he was with Weber Shandwick. The current pitch process has taken a few months and no one firm has won out yet. BLJ, which earlier did some work for Syrian first lady Asma Al-Assad (and helped get her an infamous favorable profile in Vogue in March 2011), the Qaddafi Libyan government and the Ecuador embassy, declined to comment. The Chinese embassy did not respond to a request for comment.

THE PRESIDENT is rallying in Cedar Rapids today. ***WaPo's John Wagner and Ashley Parker on the president wanting to get back on the road.*** <http://wapo.st/2rUFQJM>

FORMER DHS SECRETARY JEH JOHNSON is testifying about Russian interference this morning at 11 a.m. in front of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. ***Text of testimony*** <http://bit.ly/2sURKbd>

THE JUICE ...

-- **HAPPENING TODAY: LA STAMPA's** "The Future of Newspapers" conference in Turin, Italy. There are four panels featuring some big media heavyweights. "The editors' view" features Bloomberg's John Micklethwait, FT's Lionel Barber, Hindustan Times' Bobby Ghosh, HuffPo's Lydia Polgren and O Globo's Ascanio Seleme. "CEO's View" features POLITICO's Robert Allbritton, Le Monde's Louis Dreyfus, South China Morning Post's Gary Liu and New York Times' Mark Thompson. "Industry's view" features Jessica Lessin of the Information, NYT's Andrew Ross Sorkin, Robert Thomson of NewsCorp and Julian Reichelt of BILD. Jeff Bezos and La Stampa's owner John Elkann will speak on the "Owners' view" panel.

-- **BONO** honored Rep. Steve Scalise at his concert Tuesday night, saying he was "grateful" the Louisiana Republican survived the shooting. **SPOTTED** at the U2 show at FedEx Field: House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Sens. Chris Coons (D-Del.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Mick Mulvaney, David Brooks, Andrea Mitchell, Joel and Laura Cox Kaplan, Sally Canfield, Jim Kim, Frank Luntz, Matt Gorman, Ryan Thompson, Dwayne Carson, Dustin Carmack, Audrey Henson, Gayle Smith, Tom Hart, Andy Olson, Tom Mancinelli, Joan Condon, Janice Kaguyutan, Carrie Radelet, Tim Adams, Nilmini Rubin, Ryan Thompson, Dwayne Carson, Dustin Carmack.

-- **CONGRATS** to **PETER HAMBY** and Snap's "Good Luck America" for winning a 2017 Edward R. Murrow Award. They won for "Excellence in Innovation among Large Digital News Organizations". Snap is the first tech platform to win a Murrow (Netflix also won one this year for a documentary it made). <http://bit.ly/2rTVB3M>

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: ALEX MISTRI**, a managing director at the Glover Park Group, has joined Hess as vice president of government and external affairs.

-- **BIG DOUGH:** Leslie Wexner, the chairman of the Limited Corporation, gave \$237,300 to the NRCC in May. ... Robert Mercer gave \$334,000 to the RNC.

-- **PHIL VERVEER**, most recently senior counselor to the FCC Chairman and earlier Ambassador for International Communications and Information Policy at State Department, has joined Venable as senior counsel.

-- **POLITICO Founder John Harris** appeared last night on Comedy Central's The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. ***Watch*** <http://on.cc.com/2tN2Hs4>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Karen Handel celebrates with her husband Steve as she declares victory during an election-night watch party in the race for Georgia's 6th congressional House seat on June 20 in Atlanta. | John Bazemore/AP Photo

TRUMP INC. -- "Trump's Net Worth Slips to \$2.9 Billion as Towers Underperform," by Bloomberg's Caleb Melby: "Donald Trump's office properties aren't bringing in as much cash as banks that loaned him money had expected. That's the biggest finding in an updated assessment of the president's net worth, which has slipped to \$2.9 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, down from \$3 billion a year ago. ... The decrease is driven mostly by a drop in the value of three office properties in Manhattan, where financial data compiled by Trump's lenders offer a consistent picture: They're underperforming appraisals conducted when Trump was issued loans. The buildings -- 40 Wall Street, Trump Tower, and 1290 Avenue of the Americas, a tower in which Trump holds a 30 percent stake, are victims of a changing New York office market, where gleaming new skyscrapers are attracting tenants and demand for space in vintage properties is falling." <https://bloom.bg/2trWJxl>

AMBASSADOR WATCH -- "Grenell under consideration to be ambassador to Germany," by Josh Dawsey: "Richard 'Ric' Grenell, a former United Nations official and prominent backer of President Donald Trump, is under consideration to be ambassador to Germany, according to three people briefed on the discussions. Grenell is now unlikely to be named the pick as NATO ambassador, as was previously reported, one of these officials said. Another person familiar with the talks said NATO could be a possibility for Grenell, but that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson wants Kay Bailey Hutchison, the former Texas senator, for the post, and is likely to get his way." <http://politi.co/2rBD4tp>

INSIDE THE WEST WING -- "Despite Concerns About Blackmail, Flynn Heard C.I.A. Secrets," by NYT's Matt Apuzzo, Matt Rosenberg and Adam Goldman: "Senior officials across the government became convinced in January that the incoming national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, had become vulnerable to Russian blackmail. At the F.B.I., the C.I.A., the Justice Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence - agencies responsible for keeping American secrets safe from foreign spies - career officials agreed that Mr. Flynn represented an urgent problem. Yet nearly every day for three weeks, the new C.I.A. director, Mike Pompeo, sat in the Oval Office and briefed President Trump on the nation's most sensitive intelligence - with Mr. Flynn listening.

"Mr. Pompeo has not said whether C.I.A. officials left him in the dark about their views

of Mr. Flynn, but one administration official said Mr. Pompeo did not share any concerns about Mr. Flynn with the president. The episode highlights a remarkable aspect of Mr. Flynn's tumultuous, 25-day tenure in the White House: He sat atop a national security apparatus that churned ahead despite its own conclusion that he was at risk of being compromised by a hostile foreign power." <http://nyti.ms/2rBWHS6>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Starbucks is creating opportunities for young adults facing barriers to success, including 4.9 million young Americans who are not working or in school. We've hired 40,000 young men and women and expanded our goal to 100,000 hires by 2020. These talented, resilient young adults want to be successful and we're also making it easier to access a tuition-free college degree:

<http://sbux.co/2s2gX2g> *****

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Saudi Arabia Rewrites Succession as King Replaces Heir With Son, 31," by NYT's Ben Hubbard: "King Salman of Saudi Arabia promoted his 31-year-old son, Mohammed bin Salman, to be next in line to the throne on Wednesday, further empowering a young, activist leader at a time when the kingdom is struggling with low oil prices, a rivalry with Iran and conflicts across the Middle East. The decision to remove the previous crown prince, Mohammed bin Nayef, 57, comes as some members of the royal family have chafed at the rise of the younger prince, who emerged from relative obscurity when his father, 81, ascended the throne in January 2015. Prince Mohammed bin Salman has since accumulated vast powers in the wealthy kingdom, a crucial ally of the United States, serving as defense minister, overseeing the state oil company and working to overhaul the Saudi economy. His supporters have praised him as hard-working and as offering a hopeful vision for the kingdom's future, especially for its large youth population. His critics have called him inexperienced and power hungry." <http://nyti.ms/2tMsOzh>

JOSH ROGIN in WaPo, "The Trump administration is working to free American hostages in Iran": "Siamak Namazi, an Iranian American businessman, was arrested in Tehran in October 2015 and charged with espionage and collusion with an enemy country - the United States. ... The following month the Iranians arrested his father Baquer Namazi, a former longtime United Nations official who is 81 years old and in poor health. ... Two senior administration officials said that the Trump administration is now considering a range of measures to pressure the Iranians to release the Namazis and two other American citizens held by Iran. Those options are still secret, but include sticks more than carrots." <http://wapo.st/2sUUfKv>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Carol Lee to join NBC News," by Hadas Gold: "Lee is joining NBC News as a national political reporter. Lee is currently a White House correspondent for The Wall Street Journal. A former White House Correspondents' Association president, Lee has been with the Journal since 2011, having previously covered the White House for POLITICO. Already a frequent presence on television, Lee will appear across all NBC platforms including MSNBC ... She starts in July." <http://politi.co/2ts2rzg>

WOMEN RULE PODCAST: In the latest episode of Women Rule, actress Allison

Williams joins POLITICO editor, Carrie Budoff Brown, to discuss the evolving role of women in entertainment and her "fascination" with the Trump era. The 29-year-old actress says she doesn't believe that *Girls* could have taken place under the current administration, and that the show needed to happen while President Obama was in the White House. "I think there was a luxury to existential peace and calm that allowed the girls to live the lives they did," Williams tells Brown. <http://politi.co/2rQinyd> ... **Listen and subscribe:** <http://apple.co/2ICPzCe>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: At the Trump Hotel last night: Rudy Giuliani, Corey Lewandowski, Boris Epshteyn, and Keith Schiller at separate tables ... Rep. David Kustoff (R-Tenn.) on the 2:02 p.m. Amtrak from NY to DC.

TRANSITIONS -- Ali Pardo started as the communications director for Rep. Ann Wagner (R-Mo.). She is coming from the RNC, where she served as a spokesperson since 2013. Ali also served as the press secretary for the 2017 inauguration. ... **Crystal Carson** has started as press secretary for Gov. Terry McAuliffe's PAC, Common Good VA. Crystal previously worked on Michael Blake's campaign for DNC Vice-Chair, the Clinton campaign and in the Obama White House.

... **Mark Linton**, the former executive director of the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, has joined The Raben Group. He will be based out of the SF Bay area. <http://politi.co/2sPoemw>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Austin Bone, legislative director for Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.), married **Christina Nixon**, consultant for Accenture, over the weekend at Brasstown Valley Resort and Spa in north Georgia. The couple met in college at Washington and Lee. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2spJOxx>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Allison Clear Fastow, a partner at Blue Engine Message & Media, and **William Fastow**, the principal broker at Appleton Properties, email friends and family: "After 41 weeks and 1 day, Will and I were thrilled to meet Lucas Jacob Fastow at 6:17 a.m. this Father's Day. The mostly sleepless night ended in a relatively easy labor, with Lucas weighing in at 8lbs 1oz and measuring 20 inches long, just like his big brother Eli when he was born. The Fastow Family is complete and we couldn't be happier." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2tMCqKr>

-- **Elliot Williams**, principal at The Raben Group, and wife **Eileen Yam** have welcomed Vera Liu Williams, born Sunday. "Big brother Everett is excited to begin duties. Everyone is doing well!" **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2rUIVtk>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: early Trump aide **Sam Nunberg**, public affairs consultant based in NYC, is 36. How he's celebrating: "I will celebrate by having dinner with my

family and friends at Chef Ho's Peking Duck Grill which has become a tradition." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2tN3lpC>

BIRTHDAYS: Mike Allen, who celebrated last night at the U2 concert (h/ts Jonathan Karl, Geoff Morrell, Blain Rethmeier) ... NYT editorial board member Elizabeth Williamson, a WSJ alum ... WaPo alum Peter Perl, now senior consultant at The Reis Group ... Jake Maccoby, HFA and DOJ alum ... Tanya Singer, former general manager of Bloomberg Politics ... John Rhoden ... Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) is 7-0 ... Oregon Gov. Kate Brown is 57 ... WSJ's Laura Meckler, the pride of Cleveland ... Dan Wagner, investigative reporter at BuzzFeed and an AP and CPI alum (h/t Tim Burger) ... Kate Kochman ... Shara Mohtadi, senior advisor at the N.Y. State Energy Research and Development Authority ... George Jahn, AP's Austria bureau chief ... Time's Elizabeth Dias, covering religion and politics ... Madeleine Morgenstern, digital editor at Washington Examiner ... Jill Farquharson, Sen. Carper's press secretary (h/t Jonathan Kott) ... former Rep. Marjorie Margolies (D-Pa.) is 75 ... Washington Institute fellow David Makovsky is 57 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Caroline Weisser ... Susan Tomai of Oratorio, which trains leaders from the World Bank, State, etc. on media training and how to put together "killer presentations" (h/t Chris Breene) ...

... **Jackie Berkowitz**, manager of Netflix Originals Documentary Publicity ... NBC and Reuters alum Chris Francescani ... Politico's Marc Sames and Sara Gilliam ... Scott Allen ... Mike Faulman, former Obama W.H. advance staffer and former body man to Mayor Emanuel ... Mollie Leavitt, digital advertising intern for Precision Strategies, is 21 (h/t Ben Weinberg) ... Brian Kamoie, the pride of Altoona, Pennsylvania, former Obama WH alum and current FEMA staffer ... Bush 43 WH alum Leslie Shockley Beyer (h/ts Ed Cash) ... former Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) is 79 ... Campbell Matthews ... Delece Smith-Barrow ... Greg Hitt, VP of global corporate comms at Wal-Mart, is 55 ... Stephen E. Merrill, 77th Governor of New Hampshire, is 71 ... Mason Reynolds, JD candidate at Harvard Law ... SEC economist Max Clarke ... Cole Randle, Obama W.H. travel office alum now an associate at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer ... Jessica Straus ... Mary Meagher ... Katherine Riley ... Mary Beth Donahue ... Gordon Stott ... Ellen Golombek (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Dave Marcus ... Gary Maloney ... James Walton ... Laura Icardi ... Roger Jarrell is 47 ... Prince William is 35 ... pop singer Rebecca Black is 2-0 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Starbucks is creating opportunities for young adults facing barriers to success, including 4.9 million young Americans who are not working or in school. We've hired 40,000 young men and women and expanded our goal to 100,000 hires by 2020. These talented, resilient young adults want to be successful and we're also making it easier to access a tuition-free college degree:
<http://sbux.co/2s2gX2g> *****

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WNYT: EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday. The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

Washington Examiner: Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration. Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The Hill: GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others. The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving. Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Washington Post: John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate. The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

Wall Street Journal: Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week. The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

Washington Examiner: Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus. "We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic." Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act.

New York Times: Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision "very unfair to the president." In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions's decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. "Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else," Mr. Trump said.

The Associated Press: Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election. Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday. Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

WNYT

<http://wnyt.com/news/epa-environmental-protection-agency-saratoga-springs-concerns/4547247/>

EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

By WNYT Staff, 7/19/17 11:12 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday.

The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

"55 years, even five years is unacceptable. We've been fighting to clean up the river for 50 years," said Jamison.

Since General Electric finished up dredging the Hudson River in 2015, the EPA has been working on analyzing the cleanup. The public hearing at the Hilton comes at the EPA's conclusion of a 1,000 page five-year report on the cleanup.

The EPA says General Electric dumped its first load of PCBs into the river from its two plants in Washington County in 1947.

GE removed 310,000 pounds of PCBs from the river. It was twice what the EPA expected to find. That is one of the reasons the environmental group Riverkeeper says the EPA needs to change the cleanup plan accordingly.

"First, the levels of PCBs in the surface sediments are much higher than EPA expected. Second of all, the PCB levels in fish are much higher than EPA expected. What that means is even if the decay rates that EPA predicts occur the cleanup will still be decades late on its target," said Richard Webster, Riverkeeper Legal Program Director.

The state DEC, along with more than 40 state lawmakers also disagree with the EPA's approach.

"They are saying 50 years, their sister agencies using the same data doing a different analysis, are saying it's over a century until people can eat fish out of the river more than once a week, it's not acceptable," said Assem. Carrie Woerner, D-Round Lake.

The EPA says more dredging wouldn't significantly speed up the timeline before Hudson River fish are edible again.

There could be a third public hearing. The first was held in Poughkeepsie. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are demanding one at the end of the pollution's path, in New York City. The public comment period lasts until September 1.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-expected-to-drop-harley-davidsons-3-million-fine-for-epa-violations/article/2629160>

Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

By John Siciliano, 7/19/17 6:21 PM

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration.

Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The company had agreed to pay a \$12 million fine, in addition to the \$3 million, to settle Environmental Protection Agency claims that 340,000 of its motorcycles emitted pollution at rates that exceeded federal standards.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/overnights/342815-overnight-energy-gop-takes-on-endangered-species-reform>

GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

By Timothy Cama and Devin Henry, 7/19/17 6:06 PM

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others.

The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving.

Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Democrats, meanwhile, see the proposals as significant threats to a bedrock environmental law and a handout to industries, including oil and natural gas.

The House Natural Resources Committee discussed five bills whose effects would include allowing the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to use economic costs to deny listing a species as endangered or threatened, require the agency to prioritize input in listing decisions from states, remove the gray wolf from the endangered list and limit payouts of attorneys' fees in Endangered Species Act (ESA) litigation.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, meanwhile, debated legislation meant to boost hunting and fishing that has a provision attached to undo the gray wolf listing.

The Obama administration tried to delist the gray wolf, but a federal court reversed the decision. Provisions in both the House and the Senate would instruct the FWS to reinstate the delisting and declare that it is not subject to review by the courts.

"In short, the ESA doesn't work," said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah). "We have to find a way to reform it so that it actually solves problems, not just continues on the process. Hopefully, working with our colleagues in the Senate and the administration, we can lay a foundation for ESA reform that will do us well."

Rep. Raúl Grijalva (Ariz.), the top Democrat on the panel, shot back.

"The Endangered Species Act works," he said.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/john-mccain-republican-senator-from-arizona-has-a-brain-tumor/2017/07/19/3331c5fa-6cdf-11e7-b9e2-2056e768a7e5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_mccain-845pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.70b0d6ddd8a1

John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

By Sean Sullivan, Karoun Demirjian, and Paul Kane 7/19/17

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate.

The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

McCain, 80, has been away from the Senate this week, recovering from the surgery and undergoing tests. His office issued a statement describing him "in good spirits" and noting that his doctors say his underlying health is excellent — but not indicating when he will return to the Senate.

Glioblastoma is an aggressive type of brain cancer, and the prognosis for this kind of cancer is generally poor. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) survived less than 15 months after his was found in 2008. McCain's doctors said the "tissue of concern" was removed during the blood-clot procedure.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/gop-senators-lunch-with-trump-over-health-bills-troubles-1500483205>

Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

By Louise Radnofsky, Kristina Peterson, and Stephanie Armour, 7/19/17 10:26 PM

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week.

The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

“Any senator who votes against starting debate is really telling America that you’re fine with Obamacare,” Mr. Trump said before a lunch with the senators Wednesday. He gestured at one wavering GOP lawmaker, Dean Heller of Nevada, saying, “He wants to remain a senator, doesn’t he?” and warned lawmakers not to leave town in August without a deal.

Senate Republican leaders conceded defeat earlier this week on their effort to roll back and replace the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare, but at Mr. Trump's urging, they dug in Wednesday for what is expected to be the final push. Senate Republicans said they were hoping to rustle up 50 votes for a third version of the bill.

Mr. Trump, telling the senators they were “very close” to a deal, signaled the White House would take a more aggressive role in wrangling the 50 votes need to pass the bill. The GOP president suggested that Republicans had it easy in voting for the 2010 law's repeal when his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, was in office because they knew he would veto it and there would be no consequences.

“I’m ready to act, I have pen in hand, believe me, I’m sitting in that office. You’ve never had that before,” Mr. Trump said. “For seven years, you’ve had an easy rap: ‘We’ll repeal, we’ll replace, and he’s never going to sign it.’ ”

GOP leaders' immediate challenge is mustering 50 Republican lawmakers to approve a procedural motion that would allow debate to begin on their health-care bill.

Adding to the uncertainty, Sen. John McCain's office disclosed late Wednesday that the Arizona Republican has been diagnosed with a type of brain tumor known as a glioblastoma, and that the timing of his return to the Senate would depend on consultations with his medical team.

GOP senators said Wednesday night that the indefinite absence of Mr. McCain made their quest to get 50 votes on the health-care bill harder. "That does complicate things," said Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.).

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said after the White House lunch that a vote on that motion would happen next week, regardless of whether it was expected to pass, and that he had "every expectation" of trying to eke out a bill with majority support after that.

"I want to disabuse any of you of the notion that we will not have that vote next week," Mr. McConnell said.

GOP leaders hope that once debate begins and senators offer a variety of amendments, a majority will emerge for some version. Earlier this week, three Republicans—Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia—said they would oppose the motion to proceed on a repeal-only bill. Unless one of them changes her mind, debate can't begin because Democrats are uniformly opposed.

Among the amendments may be one to largely repeal the 2010 law without an immediate replacement. An estimate released Wednesday by the Congressional Budget Office found that such a move would leave 32 million more people uninsured and would double premiums by 2026, compared with current law. The measure would reduce federal deficits by \$473 billion over the coming decade, the CBO estimated.

About 20 GOP senators huddled for more than two hours Wednesday night, but it wasn't clear if

they had gotten any closer to securing the needed 50 votes. “Hard to say,” Mr. Toomey said upon leaving the meeting.

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus came to the meeting but was asked to stay in a room separate from the one where senators held their discussion because some lawmakers wanted to speak privately, an aide said.

“We’re at our best when we’re among ourselves,” said Sen. John Kennedy (R., La.)

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R., Alaska), an opponent of the repeal-only plan, was noncommittal on her stance after the meeting. Ms. Capito, also an opponent of that approach, declined to comment on the meeting.

The GOP currently holds 52 seats in the Senate, leaving it vulnerable to defections from conservatives, centrists or any senator with a home-state concern. Democrats have remained unified in their desire to preserve Mr. Obama’s signature domestic policy achievement.

GOP leaders are faced in the days ahead with finding ways to lure back at least some of the GOP senators who have said in recent days they couldn’t support the latest version of a bill aimed at overhauling the nation’s health-care system.

Ms. Capito, for example, is among those who have protested the bill’s cuts to Medicaid, the federal-state health program for the poor. The administration is pushing the notion of waivers for states to redesign their Medicaid programs, including more support for low-income people. Sen. Roy Blunt (R., Mo.) said Wednesday senators had discussed the idea at lunch.

Ms. Murkowski has similar concerns as well as a broader worry about her state’s fragile insurance market. Mr. Trump cited the current struggles of Alaska’s insurance markets as a reason for her to take action.

Another holdout, Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah), spoke with the president Tuesday, and Mr. Trump appeared open to the changes the senator wants, a spokesman for Mr. Lee said. A White House aide said the administration is open to any provision that increases GOP support for the bill.

Mr. Lee has been especially concerned about alterations that were made to a provision of the GOP bill written by Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), which was designed to lower premiums by allowing insurers to sell cheaper, less-comprehensive plans than allowed under current law.

Similarly, GOP leaders have said they could address some of the concerns of Sen. Jerry Moran (R., Kan.) that the bill could negatively affect his state.

Before this week, the president had been less active in the negotiations in the Senate than he was in helping pass health-care legislation in the House.

The question is whether his late intervention can turn the tide. Some Republicans have been quietly skeptical of the president's arm's-length approach to Senate negotiations, though others have said he has been smart to hold back.

"Do the tectonic plates break and begin to move?" said Sen. Bill Cassidy (R., La.), after the meeting. "I can tell you they weren't before that meeting. The fact that the president comes in and very much emphasizes the need for momentum can break those plates."

"We are getting close -- the issues are narrowing," added Sen. Ron Johnson (R., Wis.), a conservative senator who has said his support for a GOP bill isn't guaranteed.

"There is still a hope on behalf of the administration and a lot of senators too that we can get there," said Sen. John Thune (R., S.D.), a member of the chamber's leadership. "We're going to take one more shot at it."

For months, lobbyists, GOP strategists and White House officials have described the GOP health

bill in vivid metaphors, ranging from the biblical resurrection of Lazarus to the bathtub scene in “Fatal Attraction,” where an apparently vanquished villain roars back to life.

Heading into this week, a senior White House official predicted, “This bill will have been declared dead once, and resurrected at least once.” Officials also regularly cite the House’s success in passing a health bill after legislation was initially pulled from the floor in March.

Democrats, for their part, are seeking to use Mr. Trump’s revival of the GOP push to draw fresh fuel for their campaigns.

“Like the armored and mummified White Walkers from Game of Thrones, Trumpcare is hard to kill,” Sen. Jeff Merkley (D., Ore.) wrote Wednesday in a fundraising email. “Republicans continue reanimating their terrible bill to kick millions of Americans off of their health care... Chip in now and support my efforts to kill this bill once and for all!”

Democrats also hammered senators such as Mr. Heller of Nevada and Jeff Flake of Arizona, who are facing re-election campaigns in 2018, over the prospect of Medicaid cuts.

Among those warning of dire consequences if Republican senators don’t repeal Obamacare is Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel. She wrote in an email to GOP donors and supporters Wednesday that “we could lose the midterm elections” because “some in the Senate are refusing to even put a simple repeal bill on [Mr. Trump’s] desk.”

Conservative groups also joined in, including the Senate Conservatives Fund, a political-action committee, whose head Ken Cuccinelli said Wednesday the group would hold Senate Republicans accountable if they failed to pass health-care legislation.

In the Washington swamp decried by Mr. Trump, Mr. Cuccinelli said, “Mitch McConnell is the head alligator.”

Such threats may have limited effect on some of the Republican dissenters. Ms. Collins and Ms. Capito don't face re-election until 2020, and Ms. Murkowski isn't up until 2022. Still, conservative activists said they hope to send a broader message to Republicans about the importance of sticking to their promises.

"It's not just about these senators; it's about the state of the Republican party," said Rachael Slobodien, spokeswoman for the conservative Club for Growth. "This is a much bigger fight."

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/senate-holdouts-optimistic-after-late-meetings-to-revive-obamacare-replacement-bill/article/2629188>

Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

By Robert King and Susan Ferrechio

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus.

"We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic."

Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act. Lee wants language to ensure lower premiums by allowing health insurers to offer plans outside of the Obamacare mandates and in a separate pool from high-risk consumers.

Another "no" on the motion to proceed, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she remains undecided but hopeful.

"I am encouraged by the level of discussion that we had," Murkowski said.

Republican leaders are looking for ways to lure in moderates like Murkowski and Shelly Moore Capito, of West Virginia, who fear BCRA's reduction in Medicaid growth will hurt their states. They are offering additional Medicaid funding for Alaska, West Virginia and other Medicaid-dependent states, but the offer has not flipped any "no" votes yet.

The meeting, involving more than a dozen GOP lawmakers, was interrupted by the news that Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was diagnosed with a brain cancer.

"We prayed," Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., told reporters. "It was very emotional, almost kind of stunned disbelief for a minute." Hoeven said the group asked Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., a former minister, "to lead us in prayer."

McCain's health status further muddles the fate of the bill, because it takes away, at least for now, one of the 52 Senate GOP votes in play. Republicans need at least 50 to advance the bill, and Vice President Mike Pence would break the tie in the event of a 50-50 vote.

McCain has not indicated when he might return to the Senate and is faced with the possibility of chemotherapy and radiation to treat his cancer.

"Obviously, I think more people are worried about his health than thinking about the math," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn. "But you understand the math. Obviously it makes things difficult."

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is promising a vote early next week on proceeding to a bill, but it could be one of two options.

Republican leaders want the BCRA to advance, but they are threatening Republicans with a 2015 alternative bill that repeals most of Obamacare without a replacement. All but one Republican voted for it in 2015, in part because it faced a certain veto from former President

Barack Obama and would never be enacted.

Many GOP lawmakers would oppose a straight repeal vote now because it could well become law. But they are eager to avoid a contradictory and politically perilous vote on the measure.

Murkowski said she would oppose proceeding on a bill to repeal Obamacare without a replacement, but suggested the GOP leadership has not signaled which measure would be taken up next week.

"We don't have a clear determination as to what it is we are voting for," Murkowski said.

Wednesday night's meeting marked a kind of reset for the healthcare debate in the Senate, which essentially imploded earlier in the week when several senators, including Lee, announced their opposition, killing an effort to bring the BCRA to the floor.

Following a White House meeting Wednesday with President Trump, the holdouts are back at the table, and leadership is eager to make a deal.

Hoeven said "everyone is throwing out ideas, which is good from the standpoint that people are really hashing through some things so hopefully we are making some progress."

The New York Times

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/us/politics/trump-interview-sessions-russia.html?_r=0

Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

By Peter Baker, Michael Schmidt, and Maggie Haberman, 7/19/17

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff

Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision “very unfair to the president.”

In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions’s decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. “Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else,” Mr. Trump said.

In a wide-ranging interview with The New York Times, the president also accused James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he fired in May, of trying to leverage a dossier of compromising material to keep his job. Mr. Trump criticized both the acting F.B.I. director who has been filling in since Mr. Comey’s dismissal and the deputy attorney general who recommended it. And he took on Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel now leading the investigation into Russian meddling in last year’s election.

Mr. Trump said Mr. Mueller was running an office rife with conflicts of interest and warned investigators against delving into matters too far afield from Russia. Mr. Trump never said he would order the Justice Department to fire Mr. Mueller, nor would he outline circumstances under which he might do so. But he left open the possibility as he expressed deep grievance over an investigation that has taken a political toll in the six months since he took office.

Asked if Mr. Mueller’s investigation would cross a red line if it expanded to look at his family’s finances beyond any relationship to Russia, Mr. Trump said, “I would say yes.” He would not say what he would do about it. “I think that’s a violation. Look, this is about Russia.”

While the interview touched on an array of issues, including health care, foreign affairs and politics, the investigation dominated the conversation. He said that as far as he knew, he was not under investigation himself, despite reports that Mr. Mueller is looking at whether the president obstructed justice by firing Mr. Comey.

“I don’t think we’re under investigation,” he said. “I’m not under investigation. For what? I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Describing a newly disclosed informal conversation he had with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia during a dinner of world leaders in Germany this month, Mr. Trump said they talked for about 15 minutes, mostly about “pleasantries.” But Mr. Trump did say that they talked “about adoption.” Mr. Putin banned American adoptions of Russian children in 2012 after the United States enacted sanctions on Russians accused of human rights abuses, an issue that remains a sore point in relations with Moscow.

Mr. Trump acknowledged that it was “interesting” that adoptions came up since his son, Donald Trump Jr., said that was the topic of a meeting he had with several Russians with ties to the Kremlin during last year’s campaign. Even though emails show that the session had been set up to pass along incriminating information about Hillary Clinton, the president said he did not need such material from Russia about Mrs. Clinton last year because he already had more than enough.

The interview came as the White House was trying to regain momentum after the collapse of health care legislation even while the president’s son, son-in-law and former campaign chairman were being asked to talk with Senate investigators. Relaxed and engaged, the president sat at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, with only one aide, Hope Hicks, sitting in on the interview. The session was sandwiched between a White House lunch with Republican senators and an event promoting “Made in America” week.

Over the course of 50 minutes, the often-fiery Mr. Trump demonstrated his more amiable side, joking about holding hands with the president of France and musing about having a military parade down a main avenue in Washington. He took satisfaction that unemployment has fallen and stock markets have risen to record highs on his watch.

At one point, his daughter Ivanka arrived at the doorway with her daughter, Arabella, who ran to her grandfather and gave him a kiss. He greeted the 6-year-old girl as “baby,” then urged her to show the reporters her ability to speak Chinese. She obliged.

But Mr. Trump left little doubt during the interview that the Russia investigation remained a sore point. His pique at Mr. Sessions, in particular, seemed fresh even months after the attorney general’s recusal. Mr. Sessions was the first senator to endorse Mr. Trump’s candidacy and was rewarded with a key cabinet slot, but has been more distant from the president lately.

“Jeff Sessions takes the job, gets into the job, recuses himself, which frankly I think is very unfair to the president,” he added. “How do you take a job and then recuse yourself? If he would have recused himself before the job, I would have said, ‘Thanks, Jeff, but I’m not going to take you.’ It’s extremely unfair — and that’s a mild word — to the president.”

Mr. Trump also faulted Mr. Sessions for his testimony during Senate confirmation hearings when Mr. Sessions said he had not had “communications with the Russians” even though he had met at least twice with Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak. “Jeff Sessions gave some bad answers,” the president said. “He gave some answers that were simple questions and should have been simple answers, but they weren’t.”

A spokesman for Mr. Sessions declined to comment on Wednesday.

The president added a new allegation against Mr. Comey, whose dismissal has become a central issue for critics who said it amounted to an attempt to obstruct the investigation into Russian meddling in the election and any possible collusion with Mr. Trump’s team.

Mr. Trump recalled that a little more than two weeks before his inauguration, Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials briefed him at Trump Tower on Russian meddling. Mr. Comey afterward pulled Mr. Trump aside and told him about a dossier that had been assembled by a former British spy filled with salacious allegations against the incoming president, including supposed sexual escapades in Moscow. The F.B.I. has not corroborated the most sensational assertions in the dossier.

In the interview, Mr. Trump said he believed Mr. Comey told him about the dossier to implicitly make clear he had something to hold over the president. “In my opinion, he shared it so that I would think he had it out there,” Mr. Trump said. As leverage? “Yeah, I think so,” Mr. Trump said. “In retrospect.”

The president dismissed the assertions in the dossier: “When he brought it to me, I said this is really made-up junk. I didn’t think about any of it. I just thought about, man, this is such a phony

deal.”

Mr. Comey declined to comment on Wednesday.

But Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials decided it was best for him to raise the subject with Mr. Trump alone because he was going to remain as F.B.I. director. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that he disclosed the details of the dossier to Mr. Trump because he thought that the news media would soon be publishing details from it and that Mr. Trump had a right to know what information was out there about him. A two-page summary about the dossier was widely reported the week before Mr. Trump’s inauguration, including by The Times.

Mr. Trump rebutted Mr. Comey’s claim that in a one-on-one meeting in the Oval Office on Feb. 14, the president asked him to end the investigation into his former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that Mr. Trump kicked the vice president, attorney general and several other senior administration officials out of the room before having the discussion with Mr. Comey.

“I don’t remember even talking to him about any of this stuff,” Mr. Trump said. “He said I asked people to go. Look, you look at his testimony. His testimony is loaded up with lies, O.K.?”

He expressed no second thoughts about firing Mr. Comey, saying, “I did a great thing for the American people.”

Mr. Trump was also critical of Mr. Mueller, a former F.B.I. director, reprising some of his past complaints that lawyers in his office contributed money to Mrs. Clinton’s campaign. He noted that he actually interviewed Mr. Mueller to replace Mr. Comey just before his appointment as special counsel.

“He was up here and he wanted the job,” Mr. Trump said. After he was named special counsel, “I said, ‘What the hell is this all about?’ Talk about conflicts. But he was interviewing for the job. There were many other conflicts that I haven’t said, but I will at some point.”

The president also expressed discontent with Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, a former federal prosecutor from Baltimore. When Mr. Sessions recused himself, the president said he was irritated to learn where his deputy was from. "There are very few Republicans in Baltimore, if any," he said of the predominantly Democratic city.

He complained that Mr. Rosenstein had in effect been on both sides when it came to Mr. Comey. The deputy attorney general recommended Mr. Comey be fired but then appointed Mr. Mueller, who may be investigating whether the dismissal was an obstruction of justice. "Well, that's a conflict of interest," Mr. Trump said. "Do you know how many conflicts of interests there are?"

In an interview with Fox News before Mr. Trump's comments were published, Mr. Rosenstein said he was confident Mr. Mueller could avoid any conflict of interests. "We have a process with the department to take care of that," he said.

As for Andrew G. McCabe, the acting F.B.I. director, the president suggested that he, too, had a conflict. Mr. McCabe's wife, Jill McCabe, received nearly \$500,000 in 2015 during a losing campaign for the Virginia Senate from a political action committee affiliated with Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who is close friends with Hillary and Bill Clinton.

In his first description of his dinnertime conversation with Mr. Putin at the Group of 20 summit meeting in Hamburg, Germany, Mr. Trump played down its significance. He said his wife, Melania, was seated next to Mr. Putin at the other end of a table filled with world leaders.

"The meal was going toward dessert," he said. "I went down just to say hello to Melania, and while I was there I said hello to Putin. Really, pleasantries more than anything else. It was not a long conversation, but it was, you know, could be 15 minutes. Just talked about things. Actually, it was very interesting, we talked about adoption."

He noted the adoption issue came up in the June 2016 meeting between his son and Russian visitors. "I actually talked about Russian adoption with him," he said, meaning Mr. Putin. "Which is interesting because it was a part of the conversation that Don had in that meeting."

But the president repeated that he did not know about his son's meeting at the time and added that he did not need the Russians to provide damaging information about Mrs. Clinton.

"There wasn't much I could say about Hillary Clinton that was worse than what I was already saying," he said. "Unless somebody said that she shot somebody in the back, there wasn't much I could add to my repertoire."

The Associated Press

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/3d281c11a96b4ad082fe88aa0db04305/Article_2017-07-19-US--Trump-Russia%20Probe/id-82fa9ba865cd468997cc6f7c6cbba709

Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 7/19/17, 7:05 PM

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election.

Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday.

Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

"As Mr. Kushner has been saying since March, he has been and is prepared to voluntarily cooperate and provide whatever information he has on the investigations to Congress," said attorney Abbe Lowell. "He will continue to cooperate and appreciates the opportunity to assist in putting this matter to rest."

That meeting will apparently take place behind closed doors.

Alan Futerfas, a lawyer for Trump Jr., did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment about his scheduled testimony. Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said Manafort received the request Wednesday afternoon and is reading it over.

The three men will almost certainly be asked about their attendance at a June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer. That gathering was arranged via emails that advertised it would reveal damaging information about Hillary Clinton.

The lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, also said Wednesday she was ready to testify before the U.S. Senate and "clarify the situation."

The meeting raised new questions about the Trump campaign's possible ties to Moscow, which are being scrutinized by federal and congressional investigators. These questions have only intensified as the identities of other Russia-connected participants have become known.

"I am ready to clarify the situation behind the mass hysteria, but only through lawyers or testifying in the Senate," Veselnitskaya said in an interview broadcast Wednesday on Kremlin-funded RT television.

"If the Senate wishes to hear the real story, I will be happy to speak up and share everything I wanted to tell Mr. Trump," she added. That appeared to be a reference to Veselnitskaya's previous statement that the meeting with Trump Jr. focused on U.S.-Russian adoption policies and a U.S. sanctions law.

Veselnitskaya has denied working for the Russian government. She has not responded to repeated attempts by The Associated Press to reach her for comment.

Congressional investigators in both parties have said they want to hear from those involved in the meeting. The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, Virginia's Mark Warner, said Wednesday afternoon that the panel hasn't yet invited Veselnitskaya to testify, but he wants to hear from her and others who attended.

Warner said "it's still being worked out" whether some of his committee's more high-profile witnesses, including Trump Jr. and Manafort, should testify publicly or privately. The Senate and House intelligence panels conduct most of their interviews in private, but occasionally hold open hearings.

Warner said Trump Jr. has "no security clearances that I am aware of, so he should be able to testify in public."

The GOP chairman of Senate Judiciary panel, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, told Iowa reporters Wednesday that he's been talking to Trump Jr.'s lawyer and "didn't get any pushback" when suggesting he testify this week. But he said "it's kind of rushy" to call him in so quickly, and said Democrats had requested documents and emails that they wanted to see before a hearing.

Grassley had said he would subpoena the witnesses if necessary.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing will review a law that oversees the registration of foreign agents. The panel has been investigating one of the participants at the Trump Jr. meeting, Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer Rinat Akhmetshin, as part of its probe into the law.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary panel, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, said this week that special counsel Robert Mueller has cleared Trump Jr. and Manafort for public testimony. Mueller is conducting the Justice Department's investigation and Grassley has said he wants to avoid conflicts.

The House Intelligence Committee is also probing the Russian meddling, and the top Democrat on that panel, California Rep. Adam Schiff, says the committee is contacting participants in the

Trump Jr. meeting. Referencing Feinstein's comments about Mueller's clearance, he said his committee may consider public hearings "for particular witnesses" but noted it rarely holds open hearings.

The House panel is "reaching out to participants in the meeting with a request for testimony and documents, so that is very much in process at the moment," Schiff said.

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EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17

WNYT: EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday. The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

Washington Examiner: Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration. Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The Hill: GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others. The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving. Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Washington Post: John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate. The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

Wall Street Journal: Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week. The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

Washington Examiner: Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus. "We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic." Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act.

New York Times: Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions

had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision "very unfair to the president." In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions's decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. "Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else," Mr. Trump said.

The Associated Press: Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election. Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday. Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

WNYT

<http://wnyt.com/news/epa-environmental-protection-agency-saratoga-springs-concerns/4547247/>

EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

By WNYT Staff, 7/19/17 11:12 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday.

The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

"55 years, even five years is unacceptable. We've been fighting to clean up the river for 50 years," said Jamison.

Since General Electric finished up dredging the Hudson River in 2015, the EPA has been working on analyzing the cleanup. The public hearing at the Hilton comes at the EPA's conclusion of a 1,000 page five-year report on the cleanup.

The EPA says General Electric dumped its first load of PCBs into the river from its two plants in Washington County in 1947.

GE removed 310,000 pounds of PCBs from the river. It was twice what the EPA expected to find. That is one of the reasons the environmental group Riverkeeper says the EPA needs to change the cleanup plan accordingly.

"First, the levels of PCBs in the surface sediments are much higher than EPA expected. Second of all, the PCB levels in fish are much higher than EPA expected. What that means is even if the decay rates that EPA predicts occur the cleanup will still be decades late on its target," said Richard Webster, Riverkeeper Legal Program Director.

The state DEC, along with more than 40 state lawmakers also disagree with the EPA's approach.

"They are saying 50 years, their sister agencies using the same data doing a different analysis, are saying it's over a century until people can eat fish out of the river more than once a week, it's not acceptable," said Assem. Carrie Woerner, D-Round Lake.

The EPA says more dredging wouldn't significantly speed up the timeline before Hudson River fish are edible again.

There could be a third public hearing. The first was held in Poughkeepsie. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are demanding one at the end of the pollution's path, in New York City. The public comment period lasts until September 1.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-expected-to-drop-harley-davidsons-3-million-fine-for-epa-violations/article/2629160>

Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

By John Siciliano, 7/19/17 6:21 PM

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration.

Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The company had agreed to pay a \$12 million fine, in addition to the \$3 million, to settle Environmental Protection Agency claims that 340,000 of its motorcycles emitted pollution at rates that exceeded federal standards.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/overnights/342815-overnight-energy-gop-takes-on-endangered-species-reform>

GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

By Timothy Cama and Devin Henry, 7/19/17 6:06 PM

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others.

The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving.

Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Democrats, meanwhile, see the proposals as significant threats to a bedrock environmental law and a handout to industries, including oil and natural gas.

The House Natural Resources Committee discussed five bills whose effects would include allowing the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to use economic costs to deny listing a species as endangered or threatened, require the agency to prioritize input in listing decisions from states, remove the gray wolf from the endangered list and limit payouts of attorneys' fees in Endangered Species Act (ESA) litigation.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, meanwhile, debated legislation meant to boost hunting and fishing that has a provision attached to undo the gray wolf listing.

The Obama administration tried to delist the gray wolf, but a federal court reversed the decision. Provisions in both the House and the Senate would instruct the FWS to reinstate the delisting and declare that it is not subject to review by the courts.

"In short, the ESA doesn't work," said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah). "We have to find a way to reform it so that it actually solves problems, not just continues on the process. Hopefully, working with our colleagues in the Senate and the administration, we can lay a foundation for ESA reform that will do us well."

Rep. Raúl Grijalva (Ariz.), the top Democrat on the panel, shot back.

"The Endangered Species Act works," he said.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/john-mccain-republican-senator-from-arizona-has-a-brain-tumor/2017/07/19/3331c5fa-6cdf-11e7-b9e2-2056e768a7e5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_mccain-845pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.70b0d6ddd8a1

John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

By Sean Sullivan, Karoun Demirjian, and Paul Kane 7/19/17

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate.

The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

McCain, 80, has been away from the Senate this week, recovering from the surgery and undergoing tests. His office issued a statement describing him "in good spirits" and noting that his doctors say his underlying health is excellent — but not indicating when he will return to the Senate.

Glioblastoma is an aggressive type of brain cancer, and the prognosis for this kind of cancer is generally poor. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) survived less than 15 months after his was found in 2008. McCain's doctors said the "tissue of concern" was removed during the blood-clot procedure.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/gop-senators-lunch-with-trump-over-health-bills-troubles-1500483205>

Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

By Louise Radnofsky, Kristina Peterson, and Stephanie Armour, 7/19/17 10:26 PM

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week.

The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

"Any senator who votes against starting debate is really telling America that you're fine with Obamacare," Mr. Trump said before a lunch with the senators Wednesday. He gestured at one wavering GOP lawmaker, Dean Heller of Nevada, saying, "He wants to remain a senator, doesn't he?" and warned lawmakers not to leave town in August without a deal.

Senate Republican leaders conceded defeat earlier this week on their effort to roll back and replace the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare, but at Mr. Trump's urging, they dug in Wednesday for what is expected to be the final push. Senate Republicans said they were hoping to rustle up 50 votes for a third version of the bill.

Mr. Trump, telling the senators they were "very close" to a deal, signaled the White House would take a more aggressive role in wrangling the 50 votes need to pass the bill. The GOP president suggested that Republicans had it easy in voting for the 2010 law's repeal when his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, was in office because they knew he would veto it and there would be no consequences.

"I'm ready to act, I have pen in hand, believe me, I'm sitting in that office. You've never had that before," Mr. Trump said. "For seven years, you've had an easy rap: 'We'll repeal, we'll replace, and he's never going to sign it.' "

GOP leaders' immediate challenge is mustering 50 Republican lawmakers to approve a procedural motion that would allow debate to begin on their health-care bill.

Adding to the uncertainty, Sen. John McCain's office disclosed late Wednesday that the Arizona Republican has been diagnosed with a type of brain tumor known as a glioblastoma, and that the timing of his return to the Senate would depend on consultations with his medical team.

GOP senators said Wednesday night that the indefinite absence of Mr. McCain made their quest to get 50 votes on the health-care bill harder. "That does complicate things," said Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.).

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said after the White House lunch that a vote on that motion would happen next week, regardless of whether it was expected to pass, and that he had "every expectation" of trying to eke out a bill with majority support after that.

"I want to disabuse any of you of the notion that we will not have that vote next week," Mr. McConnell said.

GOP leaders hope that once debate begins and senators offer a variety of amendments, a majority will

emerge for some version. Earlier this week, three Republicans—Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia—said they would oppose the motion to proceed on a repeal-only bill. Unless one of them changes her mind, debate can't begin because Democrats are uniformly opposed.

Among the amendments may be one to largely repeal the 2010 law without an immediate replacement. An estimate released Wednesday by the Congressional Budget Office found that such a move would leave 32 million more people uninsured and would double premiums by 2026, compared with current law. The measure would reduce federal deficits by \$473 billion over the coming decade, the CBO estimated.

About 20 GOP senators huddled for more than two hours Wednesday night, but it wasn't clear if they had gotten any closer to securing the needed 50 votes. "Hard to say," Mr. Toomey said upon leaving the meeting.

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus came to the meeting but was asked to stay in a room separate from the one where senators held their discussion because some lawmakers wanted to speak privately, an aide said.

"We're at our best when we're among ourselves," said Sen. John Kennedy (R., La.)

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R., Alaska), an opponent of the repeal-only plan, was noncommittal on her stance after the meeting. Ms. Capito, also an opponent of that approach, declined to comment on the meeting.

The GOP currently holds 52 seats in the Senate, leaving it vulnerable to defections from conservatives, centrists or any senator with a home-state concern. Democrats have remained unified in their desire to preserve Mr. Obama's signature domestic policy achievement.

GOP leaders are faced in the days ahead with finding ways to lure back at least some of the GOP senators who have said in recent days they couldn't support the latest version of a bill aimed at overhauling the nation's health-care system.

Ms. Capito, for example, is among those who have protested the bill's cuts to Medicaid, the federal-state health program for the poor. The administration is pushing the notion of waivers for states to redesign their Medicaid programs, including more support for low-income people. Sen. Roy Blunt (R., Mo.) said Wednesday senators had discussed the idea at lunch.

Ms. Murkowski has similar concerns as well as a broader worry about her state's fragile insurance market. Mr. Trump cited the current struggles of Alaska's insurance markets as a reason for her to take action.

Another holdout, Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah), spoke with the president Tuesday, and Mr. Trump appeared open to the changes the senator wants, a spokesman for Mr. Lee said. A White House aide said the administration is open to any provision that increases GOP support for the bill.

Mr. Lee has been especially concerned about alterations that were made to a provision of the GOP bill written by Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), which was designed to lower premiums by allowing insurers to sell cheaper, less-comprehensive plans than allowed under current law.

Similarly, GOP leaders have said they could address some of the concerns of Sen. Jerry Moran (R., Kan.) that the bill could negatively affect his state.

Before this week, the president had been less active in the negotiations in the Senate than he was in helping pass health-care legislation in the House.

The question is whether his late intervention can turn the tide. Some Republicans have been quietly skeptical of the president's arm's-length approach to Senate negotiations, though others have said he has been smart to hold back.

"Do the tectonic plates break and begin to move?" said Sen. Bill Cassidy (R., La.), after the meeting. "I can tell you they weren't before that meeting. The fact that the president comes in and very much emphasizes the need for momentum can break those plates."

"We are getting close -- the issues are narrowing," added Sen. Ron Johnson (R., Wis.), a conservative senator who has said his support for a GOP bill isn't guaranteed.

"There is still a hope on behalf of the administration and a lot of senators too that we can get there," said Sen. John Thune (R., S.D.), a member of the chamber's leadership. "We're going to take one more shot at it."

For months, lobbyists, GOP strategists and White House officials have described the GOP health bill in vivid metaphors, ranging from the biblical resurrection of Lazarus to the bathtub scene in "Fatal Attraction," where an apparently vanquished villain roars back to life.

Heading into this week, a senior White House official predicted, "This bill will have been declared dead once, and resurrected at least once." Officials also regularly cite the House's success in passing a health bill after legislation was initially pulled from the floor in March.

Democrats, for their part, are seeking to use Mr. Trump's revival of the GOP push to draw fresh fuel for their campaigns.

"Like the armored and mummified White Walkers from Game of Thrones, Trumpcare is hard to kill," Sen. Jeff Merkley (D., Ore.) wrote Wednesday in a fundraising email. "Republicans continue reanimating their terrible bill to kick millions of Americans off of their health care... Chip in now and support my efforts to kill this bill once and for all!"

Democrats also hammered senators such as Mr. Heller of Nevada and Jeff Flake of Arizona, who are facing re-election campaigns in 2018, over the prospect of Medicaid cuts.

Among those warning of dire consequences if Republican senators don't repeal Obamacare is Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel. She wrote in an email to GOP donors and supporters Wednesday that "we could lose the midterm elections" because "some in the Senate are refusing to even put a simple repeal bill on [Mr. Trump's] desk."

Conservative groups also joined in, including the Senate Conservatives Fund, a political-action committee, whose head Ken Cuccinelli said Wednesday the group would hold Senate Republicans

accountable if they failed to pass health-care legislation.

In the Washington swamp decried by Mr. Trump, Mr. Cuccinelli said, "Mitch McConnell is the head alligator."

Such threats may have limited effect on some of the Republican dissenters. Ms. Collins and Ms. Capito don't face re-election until 2020, and Ms. Murkowski isn't up until 2022. Still, conservative activists said they hope to send a broader message to Republicans about the importance of sticking to their promises.

"It's not just about these senators; it's about the state of the Republican party," said Rachael Slobodien, spokeswoman for the conservative Club for Growth. "This is a much bigger fight."

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/senate-holdouts-optimistic-after-late-meetings-to-revive-obamacare-replacement-bill/article/2629188>

Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

By Robert King and Susan Ferrechio

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus.

"We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic."

Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act. Lee wants language to ensure lower premiums by allowing health insurers to offer plans outside of the Obamacare mandates and in a separate pool from high-risk consumers.

Another "no" on the motion to proceed, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she remains undecided but hopeful.

"I am encouraged by the level of discussion that we had," Murkowski said.

Republican leaders are looking for ways to lure in moderates like Murkowski and Shelly Moore Capito, of West Virginia, who fear BCRA's reduction in Medicaid growth will hurt their states. They are offering additional Medicaid funding for Alaska, West Virginia and other Medicaid-dependent states, but the offer has not flipped any "no" votes yet.

The meeting, involving more than a dozen GOP lawmakers, was interrupted by the news that Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was diagnosed with a brain cancer.

"We prayed," Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., told reporters. "It was very emotional, almost kind of stunned disbelief for a minute." Hoeven said the group asked Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., a former minister, "to lead us in prayer."

McCain's health status further muddles the fate of the bill, because it takes away, at least for now, one

of the 52 Senate GOP votes in play. Republicans need at least 50 to advance the bill, and Vice President Mike Pence would break the tie in the event of a 50-50 vote.

McCain has not indicated when he might return to the Senate and is faced with the possibility of chemotherapy and radiation to treat his cancer.

"Obviously, I think more people are worried about his health than thinking about the math," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn. "But you understand the math. Obviously it makes things difficult."

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is promising a vote early next week on proceeding to a bill, but it could be one of two options.

Republican leaders want the BCRA to advance, but they are threatening Republicans with a 2015 alternative bill that repeals most of Obamacare without a replacement. All but one Republican voted for it in 2015, in part because it faced a certain veto from former President Barack Obama and would never be enacted.

Many GOP lawmakers would oppose a straight repeal vote now because it could well become law. But they are eager to avoid a contradictory and politically perilous vote on the measure.

Murkowski said she would oppose proceeding on a bill to repeal Obamacare without a replacement, but suggested the GOP leadership has not signaled which measure would be taken up next week.

"We don't have a clear determination as to what it is we are voting for," Murkowski said.

Wednesday night's meeting marked a kind of reset for the healthcare debate in the Senate, which essentially imploded earlier in the week when several senators, including Lee, announced their opposition, killing an effort to bring the BCRA to the floor.

Following a White House meeting Wednesday with President Trump, the holdouts are back at the table, and leadership is eager to make a deal.

Hoeven said "everyone is throwing out ideas, which is good from the standpoint that people are really hashing through some things so hopefully we are making some progress."

The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/us/politics/trump-interview-sessions-russia.html? r=0>

Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

By Peter Baker, Michael Schmidt, and Maggie Haberman, 7/19/17

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision "very unfair to the president."

In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions's decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. "Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else," Mr. Trump said.

In a wide-ranging interview with The New York Times, the president also accused James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he fired in May, of trying to leverage a dossier of compromising material to keep his job. Mr. Trump criticized both the acting F.B.I. director who has been filling in since Mr. Comey's dismissal and the deputy attorney general who recommended it. And he took on Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel now leading the investigation into Russian meddling in last year's election.

Mr. Trump said Mr. Mueller was running an office rife with conflicts of interest and warned investigators against delving into matters too far afield from Russia. Mr. Trump never said he would order the Justice Department to fire Mr. Mueller, nor would he outline circumstances under which he might do so. But he left open the possibility as he expressed deep grievance over an investigation that has taken a political toll in the six months since he took office.

Asked if Mr. Mueller's investigation would cross a red line if it expanded to look at his family's finances beyond any relationship to Russia, Mr. Trump said, "I would say yes." He would not say what he would do about it. "I think that's a violation. Look, this is about Russia."

While the interview touched on an array of issues, including health care, foreign affairs and politics, the investigation dominated the conversation. He said that as far as he knew, he was not under investigation himself, despite reports that Mr. Mueller is looking at whether the president obstructed justice by firing Mr. Comey.

"I don't think we're under investigation," he said. "I'm not under investigation. For what? I didn't do anything wrong."

Describing a newly disclosed informal conversation he had with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia during a dinner of world leaders in Germany this month, Mr. Trump said they talked for about 15 minutes, mostly about "pleasantries." But Mr. Trump did say that they talked "about adoption." Mr. Putin banned American adoptions of Russian children in 2012 after the United States enacted sanctions on Russians accused of human rights abuses, an issue that remains a sore point in relations with Moscow.

Mr. Trump acknowledged that it was "interesting" that adoptions came up since his son, Donald Trump Jr., said that was the topic of a meeting he had with several Russians with ties to the Kremlin during last year's campaign. Even though emails show that the session had been set up to pass along incriminating information about Hillary Clinton, the president said he did not need such material from Russia about Mrs. Clinton last year because he already had more than enough.

The interview came as the White House was trying to regain momentum after the collapse of health care legislation even while the president's son, son-in-law and former campaign chairman were being asked to talk with Senate investigators. Relaxed and engaged, the president sat at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, with only one aide, Hope Hicks, sitting in on the interview. The session was sandwiched between a White House lunch with Republican senators and an event promoting "Made in America" week.

Over the course of 50 minutes, the often-fiery Mr. Trump demonstrated his more amiable side, joking about holding hands with the president of France and musing about having a military parade down a main avenue in Washington. He took satisfaction that unemployment has fallen and stock markets have

risen to record highs on his watch.

At one point, his daughter Ivanka arrived at the doorway with her daughter, Arabella, who ran to her grandfather and gave him a kiss. He greeted the 6-year-old girl as “baby,” then urged her to show the reporters her ability to speak Chinese. She obliged.

But Mr. Trump left little doubt during the interview that the Russia investigation remained a sore point. His pique at Mr. Sessions, in particular, seemed fresh even months after the attorney general’s recusal. Mr. Sessions was the first senator to endorse Mr. Trump’s candidacy and was rewarded with a key cabinet slot, but has been more distant from the president lately.

“Jeff Sessions takes the job, gets into the job, recuses himself, which frankly I think is very unfair to the president,” he added. “How do you take a job and then recuse yourself? If he would have recused himself before the job, I would have said, ‘Thanks, Jeff, but I’m not going to take you.’ It’s extremely unfair — and that’s a mild word — to the president.”

Mr. Trump also faulted Mr. Sessions for his testimony during Senate confirmation hearings when Mr. Sessions said he had not had “communications with the Russians” even though he had met at least twice with Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak. “Jeff Sessions gave some bad answers,” the president said. “He gave some answers that were simple questions and should have been simple answers, but they weren’t.”

A spokesman for Mr. Sessions declined to comment on Wednesday.

The president added a new allegation against Mr. Comey, whose dismissal has become a central issue for critics who said it amounted to an attempt to obstruct the investigation into Russian meddling in the election and any possible collusion with Mr. Trump’s team.

Mr. Trump recalled that a little more than two weeks before his inauguration, Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials briefed him at Trump Tower on Russian meddling. Mr. Comey afterward pulled Mr. Trump aside and told him about a dossier that had been assembled by a former British spy filled with salacious allegations against the incoming president, including supposed sexual escapades in Moscow. The F.B.I. has not corroborated the most sensational assertions in the dossier.

In the interview, Mr. Trump said he believed Mr. Comey told him about the dossier to implicitly make clear he had something to hold over the president. “In my opinion, he shared it so that I would think he had it out there,” Mr. Trump said. As leverage? “Yeah, I think so,” Mr. Trump said. “In retrospect.”

The president dismissed the assertions in the dossier: “When he brought it to me, I said this is really made-up junk. I didn’t think about any of it. I just thought about, man, this is such a phony deal.”

Mr. Comey declined to comment on Wednesday.

But Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials decided it was best for him to raise the subject with Mr. Trump alone because he was going to remain as F.B.I. director. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that he disclosed the details of the dossier to Mr. Trump because he thought that the news media would soon be publishing details from it and that Mr. Trump had a right to know what information was out there about him. A two-page summary about the dossier was widely reported the week before Mr.

Trump's inauguration, including by The Times.

Mr. Trump rebutted Mr. Comey's claim that in a one-on-one meeting in the Oval Office on Feb. 14, the president asked him to end the investigation into his former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that Mr. Trump kicked the vice president, attorney general and several other senior administration officials out of the room before having the discussion with Mr. Comey.

"I don't remember even talking to him about any of this stuff," Mr. Trump said. "He said I asked people to go. Look, you look at his testimony. His testimony is loaded up with lies, O.K.?"

He expressed no second thoughts about firing Mr. Comey, saying, "I did a great thing for the American people."

Mr. Trump was also critical of Mr. Mueller, a former F.B.I. director, reprising some of his past complaints that lawyers in his office contributed money to Mrs. Clinton's campaign. He noted that he actually interviewed Mr. Mueller to replace Mr. Comey just before his appointment as special counsel.

"He was up here and he wanted the job," Mr. Trump said. After he was named special counsel, "I said, 'What the hell is this all about?' Talk about conflicts. But he was interviewing for the job. There were many other conflicts that I haven't said, but I will at some point."

The president also expressed discontent with Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, a former federal prosecutor from Baltimore. When Mr. Sessions recused himself, the president said he was irritated to learn where his deputy was from. "There are very few Republicans in Baltimore, if any," he said of the predominantly Democratic city.

He complained that Mr. Rosenstein had in effect been on both sides when it came to Mr. Comey. The deputy attorney general recommended Mr. Comey be fired but then appointed Mr. Mueller, who may be investigating whether the dismissal was an obstruction of justice. "Well, that's a conflict of interest," Mr. Trump said. "Do you know how many conflicts of interests there are?"

In an interview with Fox News before Mr. Trump's comments were published, Mr. Rosenstein said he was confident Mr. Mueller could avoid any conflict of interests. "We have a process with the department to take care of that," he said.

As for Andrew G. McCabe, the acting F.B.I. director, the president suggested that he, too, had a conflict. Mr. McCabe's wife, Jill McCabe, received nearly \$500,000 in 2015 during a losing campaign for the Virginia Senate from a political action committee affiliated with Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who is close friends with Hillary and Bill Clinton.

In his first description of his dinnertime conversation with Mr. Putin at the Group of 20 summit meeting in Hamburg, Germany, Mr. Trump played down its significance. He said his wife, Melania, was seated next to Mr. Putin at the other end of a table filled with world leaders.

"The meal was going toward dessert," he said. "I went down just to say hello to Melania, and while I was there I said hello to Putin. Really, pleasantries more than anything else. It was not a long conversation, but it was, you know, could be 15 minutes. Just talked about things. Actually, it was very interesting, we

talked about adoption.”

He noted the adoption issue came up in the June 2016 meeting between his son and Russian visitors. “I actually talked about Russian adoption with him,” he said, meaning Mr. Putin. “Which is interesting because it was a part of the conversation that Don had in that meeting.”

But the president repeated that he did not know about his son’s meeting at the time and added that he did not need the Russians to provide damaging information about Mrs. Clinton.

“There wasn’t much I could say about Hillary Clinton that was worse than what I was already saying,” he said. “Unless somebody said that she shot somebody in the back, there wasn’t much I could add to my repertoire.”

The Associated Press

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/3d281c11a96b4ad082fe88aa0db04305/Article_2017-07-19-US--Trump-Russia%20Probe/id-82fa9ba865cd468997cc6f7c6cbbba709

Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 7/19/17, 7:05 PM

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election.

Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday.

Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

"As Mr. Kushner has been saying since March, he has been and is prepared to voluntarily cooperate and provide whatever information he has on the investigations to Congress," said attorney Abbe Lowell. "He will continue to cooperate and appreciates the opportunity to assist in putting this matter to rest."

That meeting will apparently take place behind closed doors.

Alan Futerfas, a lawyer for Trump Jr., did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment about his scheduled testimony. Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said Manafort received the request Wednesday afternoon and is reading it over.

The three men will almost certainly be asked about their attendance at a June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer. That gathering was arranged via emails that advertised it would reveal damaging information about Hillary Clinton.

The lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, also said Wednesday she was ready to testify before the U.S. Senate and "clarify the situation."

The meeting raised new questions about the Trump campaign's possible ties to Moscow, which are being scrutinized by federal and congressional investigators. These questions have only intensified as the identities of other Russia-connected participants have become known.

"I am ready to clarify the situation behind the mass hysteria, but only through lawyers or testifying in the Senate," Veselnitskaya said in an interview broadcast Wednesday on Kremlin-funded RT television.

"If the Senate wishes to hear the real story, I will be happy to speak up and share everything I wanted to tell Mr. Trump," she added. That appeared to be a reference to Veselnitskaya's previous statement that the meeting with Trump Jr. focused on U.S.-Russian adoption policies and a U.S. sanctions law.

Veselnitskaya has denied working for the Russian government. She has not responded to repeated attempts by The Associated Press to reach her for comment.

Congressional investigators in both parties have said they want to hear from those involved in the meeting. The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, Virginia's Mark Warner, said Wednesday afternoon that the panel hasn't yet invited Veselnitskaya to testify, but he wants to hear from her and others who attended.

Warner said "it's still being worked out" whether some of his committee's more high-profile witnesses, including Trump Jr. and Manafort, should testify publicly or privately. The Senate and House intelligence panels conduct most of their interviews in private, but occasionally hold open hearings.

Warner said Trump Jr. has "no security clearances that I am aware of, so he should be able to testify in public."

The GOP chairman of Senate Judiciary panel, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, told Iowa reporters Wednesday that he's been talking to Trump Jr.'s lawyer and "didn't get any pushback" when suggesting he testify this week. But he said "it's kind of rushy" to call him in so quickly, and said Democrats had requested documents and emails that they wanted to see before a hearing.

Grassley had said he would subpoena the witnesses if necessary.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing will review a law that oversees the registration of foreign agents. The panel has been investigating one of the participants at the Trump Jr. meeting, Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer Rinat Akhmetshin, as part of its probe into the law.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary panel, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, said this week that special counsel Robert Mueller has cleared Trump Jr. and Manafort for public testimony. Mueller is conducting the Justice Department's investigation and Grassley has said he wants to avoid conflicts.

The House Intelligence Committee is also probing the Russian meddling, and the top Democrat on that panel, California Rep. Adam Schiff, says the committee is contacting participants in the Trump Jr. meeting. Referencing Feinstein's comments about Mueller's clearance, he said his committee may consider public hearings "for particular witnesses" but noted it rarely holds open hearings. The House panel is "reaching out to participants in the meeting with a request for testimony and documents, so that is very much in process at the moment," Schiff said.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 8/7/2017 4:51:40 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD): TRUMP to head back to New York next week -- BUZZ: KAYLEIGH MCENANY joining the RNC -- PETER THIEL waffling on POTUS

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Monday afternoon. NEWS -- KAYLEIGH MCENANY is joining the RNC as its national spokesman, bringing in house a prominent supporter of President Donald Trump. McEnany is expected be a major presence on television for the GOP. She recently left CNN, where she was a contributor.

WITH TRUMP dumping all over Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) this morning, it got us questioning how he will work with Democrats this fall when the debt limit needs to be lifted and government needs to be funded. Republicans will definitely need Democratic votes for must-pass legislation like lifting the nation's borrowing limit. Sources tell us Trump has not had substantive conversations with Democratic Hill leaders in some time. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer haven't been to the White House in some time.

NEWS , per pooler Peter Baker of the NYT: Cabinet secretaries are expected at Bedminster over the next few days and VP Mike Pence will also come up. "Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump have been here all weekend and are still here. John Kelly has been here all weekend and will be here during the week. Rick Waddell, the deputy national security adviser, is here. Kellyanne Conway will be coming. Elaborating on the presidential tweet from earlier this morning, Walters says Potus will spend part of the first half of next week in New York. Details to come." ...

... **TRUMP** spoke with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chief of Staff John Kelly for an hour to talk about Tillerson's trip to Asia and North Korea, per Baker.

FROM BEDMINSTER -- TWEETS IN THE JOHN KELLY ERA -- @realDonaldTrump at 6:38 a.m.: "The failing @nytimes, which has made every wrong prediction about me including my big election win (apologized), is totally inept!" ... **at 6:58 a.m.:** "The Trump base is far bigger & stronger than ever before (despite some phony Fake News polling). Look at rallies in Penn, Iowa, Ohio....." **at 7:04 a.m.:** "...and West Virginia. The fact is the Fake News Russian collusion story, record Stock Market, border security, military

strength, jobs....." ... **at 7:09 a.m.:** "... Supreme Court pick, economic enthusiasm, deregulation & so much more have driven the Trump base even closer together. Will never change!" ... **at 7:18 a.m.:** "Hard to believe that with 24/7 #Fake News on CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, NYTIMES & WAPO, the Trump base is getting stronger!" ... **at 7:32 a.m.:** "Working hard from New Jersey while White House goes through long planned renovation. Going to New York next week for more meetings." ...

... **at 7:47 a.m.:** "Interesting to watch Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut talking about hoax Russian collusion when he was a phony Vietnam con artist!" ... **at 7:52 a.m.:** "Never in U.S.history has anyone lied or defrauded voters like Senator Richard Blumenthal. He told stories about his Vietnam battles and...." ... **at 8:01 a.m.:** "...conquests, how brave he was, and it was all a lie. He cried like a baby and begged for forgiveness like a child. Now he judges collusion?"

-- **THE NEW YORK TIMES** did not apologize. The information Trump is using to criticize Blumenthal for came from a New York Times story!

BLUMENTHAL RESPONDS -- @SenBlumenthal: "Mr. President: Your bullying hasn't worked before and it won't work now. No one is above the law."

-- **A REMINDER:** In the 1990s, Trump tried to acquire the Empire State Building from Blumenthal's wife's family, which owned the New York City landmark for years.
<http://n.pr/2vbXRlq>

-- **@KFILE:** "Something that's always struck me as under-reported is Trump's misleading statements about how he avoid Vietnam. I've listened to lifetime archival footage of Trump - for years he always mentioned attributed 'high lottery number' never deferments."

PHOTO OF THE DAY -- @jacobkornbluh: "Netanyahu met today with Democratic congressional delegation headed by @WhipHoyer in Jerusalem - photo by Amos Ben Gershom GPO" <http://bit.ly/2hBzA9U>

PLAYBOOK ON THE ROAD -- With everyone headed out of town on vacation, or back to their districts, we are starting a new August feature: Playbook on the Road. Send us a photo of yourself, or others reading Playbook during your travels this month and we will feature five photos every Friday. Participating Playbookers will automatically be entered into a drawing to win a signed cartoon by POLITICO's Pulitzer winning cartoonist Matt Wuerker. Email photos to Daniel at daniel@politico.com. Or, Tweet them to @playbookplus with the hashtag #PlaybookLoyal.

SPOTTED -- RUTH BADER GINSBURG dining at La Piquette in Cleveland Park Sunday night.

VALLEY WATCH -- "Peter Thiel Has Been Hedging His Bet On Donald Trump," by BuzzFeed's Ryan Mac: "Donald Trump's most prominent Silicon Valley supporter has

distanced himself from the president in multiple private conversations, describing at different points this year an 'incompetent' administration, and one that may well end in 'disaster.' Peter Thiel's unguarded remarks have surprised associates, some of whom are still reeling from his full-throated endorsement of Trump at the Republican National Convention. And while the investor stands by the president in public -- 'I support President Trump in his ongoing fight,' he said in a statement to BuzzFeed News -- his private doubts underscore the fragility of the President's backing even from his most public allies. ...

"Thiel's views remain private -- but various disparaging comments were recounted to BuzzFeed News by three separate sources, and others who subsequently confirmed those accounts. These people requested anonymity for fear of damaging personal relationships and possible retribution. While Thiel told Trump that he is off to a 'terrific start' at a White House event in June, his previous statements to friends and associates did not reflect that sentiment. In half a dozen private conversations with friends that were described to BuzzFeed News dating from spring 2016 to as recently as May, Thiel, who served on the Presidential Transition Team Executive Committee, has criticized Trump and his administration and developed increasingly pessimistic feelings about the president." <http://bzfd.it/2uzbvBC>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** If you know only one fact about rising drug costs, know this one: drug makers set prices for prescription drugs. To help manage nearly double-digit price increases, employers, unions and government programs use PBMs to negotiate lower net prices to help curb costs for employers and patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

A BIG DEAL -- THE POST AND COURIER'S GLENN SMITH: "Emails: South Carolina AG coordinated with key figure in statehouse probe on letter booting special prosecutor off case": " South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson enlisted the help of a central figure in the Statehouse corruption probe in an attempt to sideline the case's special prosecutor just as the investigation was about to zero in on Wilson's close allies, according to emails obtained by The Post and Courier.

"It's a highly unusual move that legal observers say raises serious questions about the allegiances of the state's chief law enforcement official and his willingness to meddle in matters in which he had already revealed a potential conflict. Wilson, however, painted the emails as an innocent exchange with a trusted adviser with better grammar skills. The emails, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, show Wilson used his private account to coordinate with his embattled political consultant Richard Quinn on an October 2014 letter aimed at derailing the investigation being conducted by Wilson's handpicked special prosecutor, David Pascoe.

"The exchange came as Pascoe prepared to dig deeper into a State Law Enforcement Division report detailing alleged misdeeds by sitting lawmakers. Named in that document were Quinn and his son, state Rep. Rick Quinn, who was also identified as a potential target of the probe. Just a few weeks earlier, Wilson had told his chief

deputy he had a potential conflict and needed to be 'firewalled' on the matter.

"But that didn't stop the attorney general from seeking advice from the elder Quinn on phrasing a letter to pull Pascoe off the case, the email chain shows. 'Letter 1 is the longer one I read to you tonight. Letter 2 is a slightly shorter version,' Wilson wrote to the elder Quinn. 'I will be working on these tomorrow with Bob. Let me know what you think.' Quinn returned a revised draft to the Attorney General's Office the following day, noting that it contained 'a few new edits.' That same day, Pascoe was informed that Wilson's office would be handling the investigation from there on." <http://bit.ly/2vetL5k>

THE WINTER WHITE HOUSE -- "'Apply by fax': Before it can hire foreign workers, Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club advertises at home -- briefly," by WaPo's David Fahrenthold and Lori Rozsa: "President Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club needs to hire 35 waiters for this winter's social season in Palm Beach, Fla. Late last month, the club placed an ad on page C8 of the Palm Beach Post, crammed full of tiny print laying out the job experience requirements in classified ad shorthand. '3 mos recent & verifiable exp in fine dining/country club,' the ad said. 'No tips.'

"The ad gave no email address or phone number. 'Apply by fax,' it said. The ad also provided a mailing address. It ran twice, then never again. This was an underwhelming way to attract local job-seekers. But that wasn't the point. The ads were actually part of Mar-a-Lago's efforts to hire foreign workers for those 35 jobs." <http://wapo.st/2uivnOv>

ABOUT THOSE NOMINATIONS -- "Warren Blocks Trump's Pick for Antitrust Chief," by Bloomberg's Sara Forden and Billy House: "Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren put a 'hold' on the confirmation of Makan Delrahim, President Donald Trump's nominee to run the Justice Department's antitrust division, delaying a vote until at least September, according to two people familiar with the matter. The delay means Delrahim remains on the outside as Justice Department lawyers wrap up their investigation of AT&T Inc. and Time Warner Inc.'s proposed \$85.4 billion merger and start early talks with company representatives about possible conditions that could secure approval. AT&T's bid for the owner of CNN and HBO would reshape the media landscape and has drawn fire from Trump." <https://bloom.bg/2uidQFP>

DAVID BAILEY, a member of Steve Scalise's police detail who was injured in the attack, "has been placed on administrative leave due to his injuries, and during the investigation of the events of June 14, 2017. As a result of the injuries sustained, Agent Bailey has incurred financial burdens." *Donate* <http://bit.ly/2wAmNql>

PLAYBOOK BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Cuomo mulls running for a third term -- 'Barack Obama Day' declared in Illinois <http://politi.co/2uiRhAW>

SPORTS BLINK -- "A dream and a reality, the 2028 Olympics give Los Angeles a chance to imagine its future," by the LA Times' Thomas Curwen: "Los Angeles is famous for its ability to court both dreamers and pragmatists. For every eccentric ambition, there is a broken sidewalk needing repair. For every point of pride, a darkened

shadow. But the city is too easily rendered in either utopian or dystopian terms, as if each is mutually exclusive. Will the 2028 Games be fiscally wise or foolish? Will they be politically popular or a political blunder?" <http://lat.ms/2uyRaN9>

AWARDS CIRCUIT -- Venezuelan human rights activist and attorney Alfredo Romero has been named the 2017 winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. **Full release** <http://bit.ly/2uzbTQA>

MEMO FROM MARTY KADY TO THE POLITICO NEWSROOM -- "First, we're thrilled to announce that Jane Norman, a veteran policy editor who has spent the past eight years at CQ, will be joining Pro as a multi-vertical editor, with primary oversight of our Pro Education team, as well as senior editing oversight of the Budget and Appropriations team. Jane is currently the policy editor managing budget and appropriations coverage at CQ, and she has edited multiple policy areas in the past....

"[W]e have a big hire on the Pro Agriculture team. Christine Haughney, who has spent more than 15 years working for newspapers including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post, will join the team as the primary Morning Agriculture newsletter writer. Christine has developed a specialty in food and agriculture policy in recent years, and just spent the past year developing a six-part investigative television series about global food safety that is streaming in early 2018."

HOT JOB -- Senior Social Media Coordinator - New York, NY -- for Ivanka Trump's company: "We're looking for a smart, experienced and motivated Senior Social Media Coordinator-a digital native who understands the unique needs and capabilities of each social channel and can navigate them seamlessly while growing our reach. In partnership with the Senior Marketing Manager and under the guidance of the VP of Marketing & Brand Strategy, this person will be responsible for concepting, creating, managing and analyzing content across all social media platforms. This person will be constantly connected and uniquely tasked with understanding our brand's vision and voice. We are looking for an innovative, creative thinker who's a team player and eager to dive head-first into an exciting, constantly evolving and rapidly" *One of the responsibilities:* - "Engage with our online networks-responding to comments, retweeting and reposting where applicable" <http://bit.ly/2vcqvJl>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Brian Faler, senior tax reporter at Politico and a Bloomberg alum, and **Amanda Lahan**, director of membership affairs at the U.S.-Russia Business Council, recently welcomed David Lahan Faler. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2vFJa13>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :**
The high prices that drug makers set for prescription drugs can put financial strain on patients, employers, unions and others who provide health care coverage to more than 50 percent of Americans. Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers, unions and government programs. But, as list prices - the starting point for those negotiations -- continue their nearly double-digit

increases, the effects ripple throughout the system. The key to ensuring greater access and affordability lies in fostering greater competition. Facilitating faster reviews of generics and biosimilars, identifying off-patent drugs with little or no generic competition, and ending anti-competitive practices that keep safe, effective alternatives out of the market are also key to abating rising drug costs for patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by UC Davis

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

BUCKLE UP... The New Yorker's Jane Mayer and Ronan Farrow dropped a bombshell story before 7 p.m. Monday that detailed extensive allegations of physical abuse and excessive drinking by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who has been one of the leading legal figures in the state against "Me Too" perpetrators like Harvey Weinstein (<http://bit.ly/2FTLH9k>). He resigned by 10 p.m. ...

... **THE PRESIDENT** is expected to announce whether he is going to pull out of the Iran nuclear accord today at 2 p.m. AP quoted Iran's president as saying "It is possible that we will face some problems for two or three months, but we will pass through this" ...

... **In West Virginia, Don Blankenship**, a former coal CEO who spent time in prison, could win the GOP primary race tonight to run against Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin. Blankenship has made outwardly racist remarks. If he wins, Republicans on Capitol Hill and in the White House believe it could alter the balance of power in the Senate. ...

... **DEVIN NUNES**, the Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, is threatening to hold Republican Attorney General Jeff Sessions in contempt for not forking over documents he wants. "It wasn't a threat. It's what's going to happen," Nunes told John Bresnahan yesterday. (<https://politi.co/2rq5J0>) ... **GINA HASPEL**, the president's embattled nominee to lead the CIA, will go before the Senate Intelligence Committee Wednesday. She's on the Hill today, meeting Democratic Sens. Jack Reed (R.I.) and Ron Wyden (Ore.).

Good Tuesday morning. WE'LL SIT DOWN with **NANCY PELOSI** this morning at the Liaison Hotel. Doors open at 8 a.m., and the program will start around 8:30 a.m. If you can't make it, we'll livestream it. **Watch it here** <https://politi.co/2HV3z9y>

RESCISSIONS PACKAGE EXPECTED TO DROP TODAY -- "Trump tries to woo

conservatives with bid to cut spending," by Sarah Ferris and Kaitlyn Burton: "The White House on Tuesday will send \$15 billion in proposed spending cuts to Congress in an attempt to demonstrate fiscal austerity to skeptical conservatives, senior administration officials confirmed Monday night.

"The administration had last week planned to send Congress a package of \$11 billion in spending reductions. But since then, some conservatives have quietly pushed for an even bolder proposal, particularly after the GOP's spending binge in recent months, said Republicans familiar with the discussions." <https://politi.co/2wihSQf>

-- SOMETHING TO WATCH: One of the White House's biggest targets in the cuts package is \$7 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides health care to 9 million low-income children, per Sarah and Kaitlyn. Of that \$7 billion, \$5 billion is from unspent money and \$2 billion is from an emergency fund. It's hard to see a lot of Republicans up for reelection wanting to cut health care for poor kids no matter where it comes from. The package is expected to pass the House. Its future is more uncertain in the Senate.

THIS EXPOSES THE BIG GULF between the Senate and the House. If you talk to Senate GOP folks, they'll just shake their head and say some version of: "the juice isn't worth the squeeze." Why, Senate Republicans ask, hand Democrats a talking point of "Republicans want to cut health care for poor kids." They say this kind of stuff is political poison and self-inflicted pain.

-- FOR YOUR RADAR: Democrats are going to challenge the use of a simple-majority vote in the Senate, because this package cuts from mandatory spending. Non-partisan parliamentarians will play a big role in determining whether this can pass by majority.

A BIT OF PALACE INTRIGUE ... A House GOP aide sends along that the legislative branch appropriations subcommittee is cutting funding for the office of the former speaker from five years to one year, at the request of Speaker Paul Ryan. The aide notes that House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi wants to completely eliminate the funding for former speakers -- and Ryan is cool with that. This is minor, but interesting. It will play out today. This perk is tricky, because the last two speakers who have left -- Dennis Hastert and John Boehner -- have both gone to law firms. Jake and Bresnahan wrote about this nine years ago. <https://politi.co/2K32qt8>

MEMBERS OF TEAM SCALISE past and present threw the majority whip a party on the Adams and Reese rooftop celebrating his 10 years in Congress. (Scalise took office in Jan. 2008 after Bobby Jindal left the seat to become governor.) **SPOTTED:** Brett Horton, Lynnel Ruckert, Megan Miller, Bart Reising, Lauren Fine, Chris Bond, Ben Napier, David Planning, Bill Hughes, Marty Reiser, Kelley Hudak, Tyler Daniel, Stephanie Belk, Jenny Drucker, and Scalise alums including Lynnel Ruckert, Matt Bravo, Chris Hodgson, Eric Zulkosky, Will Dunham, Megan Becker and Matt Jewell. **Photo of Scalise chief of staff Horton, former COS Ruckert and personal office chief Megan Miller** <http://bit.ly/2K1GD4Z> ... **A group shot** <http://bit.ly/2KJErQM>

SHOT ... DARREN SAMUELSON speaks to **RUDY GIULIANI**: "**Giuliani: Russia probe will motivate Trump voters for midterms**": "It has his people much more excited now than before,' the former New York mayor, who last month took on a new assignment as the president's personal attorney, said in an interview on Monday. ...

"He says the president is satisfied with his work as his attorney despite recent controversies stemming from television interviews in which he disclosed contradictory information about payments to the adult film actress Stormy Daniels. 'If I'm not up to it, I don't know who is,' Giuliani said. 'I know the Justice Department better than just about anyone.'" <https://politi.co/2K31uVE>

CHASER -- "Trump grows frustrated with Giuliani as Stormy Daniels drama rages on," by Eliana Johnson, Annie Karni and Darren Samuelson: "President Donald Trump has shaken up his legal team in the last three weeks - and he's still not happy. The president has been griping to associates that Rudy Giuliani, his new personal attorney, has failed to shut down the Stormy Daniels hush money saga.

"And he has expressed frustration that Giuliani's media appearances are raising more questions than they are answering, turning the story into a days-long drama capped by the admission Sunday that the president may have made similar payments to other women.

"For now, White House aides said, Giuliani still has a direct line in to Trump - the two speak almost daily - and nobody in the West Wing is eager to insert themselves between the two irascible New Yorkers by yanking Giuliani off TV. But some aides said they expect the president to fire Giuliani if his behavior doesn't change."

<https://politi.co/2rsEKXw>

TOODALOO TEHRAN -- "Unswayed by Allies, Trump Is Expected to Leave Iran Deal, Diplomats Say," by NYT's David E. Sanger and Steven Erlanger: "President Trump is expected to announce on Tuesday that he is withdrawing the United States from the Iran nuclear deal, European diplomats said after concluding that they had failed to convince him that reneging on America's commitment to the pact could cast the West into new confrontation with Tehran.

"If the diplomats are correct, the announcement will be the most consequential national security decision of Mr. Trump's 15 months in office - though it could be eclipsed in coming weeks by his direct negotiation with North Korea's leader over surrendering its nuclear arsenal. One senior European diplomat who has been deeply involved in trying to persuade Mr. Trump to stay in the deal told reporters on Monday the chance that the president would keep the agreement intact was 'very small.'"

<https://nyti.ms/2rrQQbQ>

******* A message from UC Davis:** UC Davis' passion for protecting water runs deep. Our collaborations with industry and with conservation organizations are proving that

sustainable water use benefits both native species and the people that depend on water for their livelihoods. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

NOMINATION WATCH -- "National security officials preparing contingency plans if Haspel's nomination fails," by CNN's Jenna McLaughlin: "One of the contingency plans being discussed involves preparing Susan Gordon, the deputy director of national intelligence, to potentially take Haspel's place in case Republican senators or Trump balk, two intelligence sources familiar with the matter said. Two additional sources who spoke with Republican strategists and lawmakers were also aware of general contingency planning. It's unclear how formal these conversations are, but two of the sources said Gordon was in varying stages of being prepared." <https://cnn.it/2FUmED0>

WILD AND WONDERFUL WEST VIRGINIA ...

-- ALEX ISENSTADT in MOUNT HOPE, W.VA: "Blankenship, predicting victory, thumbs his nose at GOP": "A defiant Don Blankenship on Monday shrugged off President Donald Trump's last-minute plea for Republican primary voters to reject his insurgent Senate candidacy - and flatly predicted it would fail to halt his momentum.

"On the final day of the dramatic West Virginia campaign, the coal baron and ex-prisoner seemed unbothered by the president's foray into the contest, arguing that voters would see through it as the latest ploy in an establishment-led effort aimed at keeping him from winning the nomination.

"'I think it's still over,' he declared to reporters here during a frenzied final day of the race. 'It probably tightens it a point or two, but I don't think it matters much.' At another point in the day, after a reporter asked if he was feeling confident, Blankenship had a deadpan response: 'Yeah, we're gonna win.'" <https://politi.co/2whFEvw>

-- WHO IS REALLY TO BLAME: "Flake blames Trump for rise of Blankenship in West Virginia," by John Bresnahan: "[A]ccording to Flake, Trump's use of racially charged language and messages during the 2016 race for the White House -and his success in doing so - has inspired other GOP hopefuls to try to do the same, including Blankenship.

"'The problem with normalizing statements and behavior like we've seen over the last couple years leads to this kind of thing,' Flake said. 'If it's still OK to talk about "China people" or whatever else. But that's not too dissimilar a word from some of the language we've heard used successfully.' Flake added: 'When you talk about "Mexican rapists" or a judge who can't judge fairly because of his Mexican heritage. Words have meaning, and this isn't going to be helpful to anyone.'" <https://politi.co/2KKVxhi>

-- FLASHBACK: "Before the Blankenship-McConnell Feud, the Senator Aided the Mining Executive," by ProPublica's Alec MacGillis: "What has gone overlooked amid this extraordinary clash, is that 18 years ago, both McConnell and Chao effectively sprang to the defense of Blankenship, sparing his company considerable cost and

consequences for a disaster that unfolded in their home state of Kentucky in the middle of the night on Oct. 11, 2000." <http://bit.ly/2HX8uXy>

-- **THE OBVIOUS QUESTION HERE** is what does Mitch McConnell, the NRSC and the constellation of big-money outside groups that support Senate Republicans do if Blankenship wins. It's very difficult to see McConnell supporting Blankenship after he called the majority leader's wife's family "China people," and suggested the Kentucky Republican has mixed allegiances because of Elaine Chao's family's heritage. But knocking Sen. Joe Manchin out of the Senate has always been part of the GOP plan to keeping -- or expanding -- their majority in the Senate.

THE PRUITT FILES ...

-- **NYT'S CORAL DAVENPORT and MAGGIE HABERMAN: "White House Aides Are Urging President Trump to Fire Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. Chief":** "Senior White House staff members are encouraging President Trump to fire Scott Pruitt, his embattled [EPA] chief, according to two top administration officials. While Mr. Trump has until now championed Mr. Pruitt, the officials say the president's enthusiasm may be cooling because of the ongoing cascade of alleged ethical and legal missteps.

"Over the past few months, as Mr. Pruitt's problems have mounted - he is now the subject of at least 11 federal investigations and some Republicans have called for his resignation - Mr. Trump has continued to support his E.P.A. chief on Twitter and in public and private remarks.

"But that is likely to change in the coming weeks, the two officials said. Since last month's confirmation of Mr. Pruitt's deputy, the former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler, White House staff members say they believe that if Mr. Pruitt is fired or resigns, Mr. Wheeler will continue to effectively push through Mr. Trump's agenda to help the coal industry and roll back environmental regulations." <https://nyti.ms/2KLiCQP>

-- **"Pruitt fast-tracked California cleanup after Hugh Hewitt brokered meeting,"** by Emily Holden and Anthony Adragna: "EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt placed a polluted California area on his personal priority list of Superfund sites targeted for 'immediate and intense' action after conservative radio and television host Hugh Hewitt brokered a meeting between him and lawyers for the water district that was seeking federal help to clean up the polluted Orange County site.

"The previously unreported meeting, which was documented in emails released by EPA under a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit by the Sierra Club, showed Pruitt's staff reacting quickly to the request last September by Hewitt, who has been one of Pruitt's staunchest defenders amid a raft of ethics controversies around his expensive travel, security team spending and a cheap Washington condo rental from a lobbyist. ...

"Hewitt, a resident of Orange County whose son James works in EPA's press office, emailed Pruitt in September to set up a meeting between the administrator and

the law firm Larson O'Brien, which employs Hewitt and represents the Orange County Water District. Pruitt had been planning to meet with the lawyers in California a month earlier, but cancelled the trip to undergo knee surgery." <https://politi.co/2FTgD9m>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- The president is meeting with Senate Republicans in the morning. He will have lunch with VP Mike Pence and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. This afternoon he will give remarks on the Iran deal followed by a speech for the Federal Judges Association.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Washington Capitals' Evgeny Kuznetsov gets the game-winning goal against the Pittsburgh Penguins during overtime in Game 6 of an NHL second-round hockey playoff series in Pittsburgh on Monday. | Gene J. Puskar/AP Photo

FIRST PERSON - ANNA KAIN in WaPo, "**I'm sharing my #MeToo story because Congress is broken, and we have to fix it**": "It has been about three months since the House passed #MeToo legislation to reform how cases of harassment are handled on Capitol Hill. ... But similar legislation sits idly in the Senate, with Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) unwilling to bring it to the floor for a vote. This is shameful and unconscionable. Congress must pass this bill. ... The employment contracts and nondisclosure agreements required by some congressional offices upon hiring should never be allowed to prevent a staffer from protecting himself or herself.

"There should be no time limits on when a complaint can be filed. The proposed Office of Employee Advocacy must be required to disclose the limits of the counsel it provides, including any guidance on civil action. And the impartiality of advocates assigned by the office to guide staffers through this process must be ensured." <https://wapo.st/2wtn2bU>

HAPPENING TODAY -- "HUD Secretary Ben Carson to be sued for suspending Obama-era fair-housing rule," by WaPo's Tracy Jan: "Fair-housing advocates planned to file a lawsuit early Tuesday against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and HUD Secretary Ben Carson for suspending an Obama-era rule requiring communities to examine and address barriers to racial integration. The 2015 rule required more than 1,200 communities receiving billions of federal housing dollars to draft plans to desegregate their communities - or risk losing federal funds.

"After nearly 50 years of inaction, the rule was seen as a belated effort by HUD to enforce the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, which compelled communities to use federal dollars to end segregation in residential neighborhoods. ... Carson, who has long criticized federal efforts to desegregate

American neighborhoods as 'failed socialist experiments,' suspended the rule in January, allowing local and state governments to continue receiving HUD grants without compliance with the full requirements of the Fair Housing Act."

<https://wapo.st/2K0mD2O>

***** **A message from UC Davis:** Around the world, our passion for protecting water runs deep. UC Davis experts study every type of aquatic environment, advise on water policy and work with conservation advocates and industry to find mutually beneficial solutions to sustainable water management. Our innovations are also addressing the effects of climate change, from breeding drought-tolerant plants and flooding farms to restore groundwater, to smart irrigation technology that helps farmers analyze water use. All to help protect our most precious resource. Learn more at

21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

AGENCY WATCH -- "'Like a Mosquito in a Nudist Colony.' How Mick Mulvaney Found Plenty to Target at Consumer Bureau," by NYT's Glenn Thrush and Alan Rappeport: "In his time in the Trump administration, Mick Mulvaney has produced two budgets that slashed federal spending and were heralded as blueprints for the deconstruction of the administrative state. Even Republicans ignored them, and Congress then added billions to the very programs he targeted in what seemed a personal rebuke. But Mr. Mulvaney - President Trump's exasperated, restless, but deeply determined budget director - has found an alternative path to relevance in Mr. Trump's Washington.

"A firebrand fiscal hawk as a congressman from South Carolina, Mr. Mulvaney has seized on his second job as the interim chief of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau as an opportunity to dismantle an Obama-era watchdog agency vilified by Republicans since its inception as an example of government overreach. ... 'There are lots of targets of opportunity over there for Mick,' said Marc Short, Mr. Trump's legislative affairs director. 'He's like a mosquito in a nudist colony.'"

<https://nyti.ms/2I1ZpIW>

MEDIAWATCH - SCOOP: "Qatar eyes stake in Newsmax," by Ben Schreckinger with Daniel Lippman: "The Qatari government has sought to acquire a major stake in Newsmax, the conservative media company run by President Donald Trump's friend Chris Ruddy, according to two people with knowledge of the talks. Qatari officials met with Newsmax representatives on multiple occasions this year ... Ruddy, reached for comment, declined to address specific questions, saying only 'this is all false.' A spokesman for the Qatari embassy also declined to comment. ... The Qataris have eyed a \$90 million investment, according to the people. The money would be used in large part to expand the company's television operations." <https://politi.co/2rri9ez>

-- **Kyle Feldscher** is now CNN's PM breaking news editor. He previously held a similar role at the Washington Examiner.

Playbookers

<http://bit.ly/2K1BSZb>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Anson Kaye, partner at GMMB. **How he got his start in politics:** "Standing with my dad as a kid, holding a Ted Kennedy for president sign." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <https://politi.co/2rsnzWX>

BIRTHDAYS: Melissa Moss of strategic consulting firm Moss Advisors (hat tip: Kelley McCormick) ... Amy Little Thomas ... NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio is 57 ... Dave Catanese, senior politics writer at U.S. News ... Politifact's Manuela Tobias ... Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-Fla.) is 67 ... Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Mich.) is 57 ... Adam Hitchcock, managing partner at Guggenheim Partners and an Obama alum ... Meredy Talbot-Zorn ... Kim Greenhouse ... Stephen Peters, senior national press secretary and spokesman at Human Rights Campaign ... L.A. Times' Chris Megerian ... Bill Oldaker, partner at the Oldaker Group ... Josh Lockman ... Alix Haber (h/ts Jon Haber) ... CAP's Miranda Peterson ... Joan Doty ... John Martin ... Cristina Allegretti ... Seth Freeland ... Mike Neal ... FT's Jim Brunsten ... Molly Devereaux (h/t dad Jack Howard) ... Danny Danon, Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN, is 47 ...

... **Ed Meagher**, weekend programming manager at CNN (h/ts Adam Chariton and Kevin Bohn) ... Geoffrey Cowan is 76 ... Politico's André Bransford and Shahab Rahmani ... NBC News' Clare Hiler ... Tyler Hatch is 27 ... Kelley Greenman ... Ashley Pratte of the Herald Group ... Eileen Davis ... Daniel Ki of the Obama Foundation ... John Lott, Jr. ... Eric Rodrigues ... Claire Guthrie Gastanaga, executive director of ACLU of Virginia ... Edelman's Marissa Maggio ... Molly Howard ... former Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) is 81 ... Adam Feiler ... Sian Wetherill ... Cathy Duvall ... Shane Grady ... Valerie Bhappu ... Jim Cope ... Heather Handyside ... Stephanie Sanchez ... David Lam ... John Stirrup ... Tom McCuin ... Lisa Katz Pagel.

***** **A message from UC Davis:** Around the world, our passion for protecting water runs deep. UC Davis experts study every type of aquatic environment, advise on water policy and work with conservation advocates and industry to find mutually beneficial solutions to sustainable water management. Our innovations are also addressing the effects of climate change, from breeding drought-tolerant plants and flooding farms to restore groundwater, to smart irrigation technology that helps farmers analyze water use. All to help protect our most precious resource. Learn more at 21stcentury.ucdavis.edu. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Fri 11/3/2017 9:41:35 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Murray benefits big league under Perry grid plan — Oil's big tax bill win — FERC back at full strength after Senate confirmations — Lamar Smith announces retirement

By Anthony Adragna | 11/03/2017 05:40 AM EDT

With help from Ben Lefebvre, Darius Dixon, Nick Juliano and Esther Whieldon

ONE REALLY BIG FAN OF PERRY'S PUSH: Energy Secretary Rick Perry's push to require power markets to cover the costs to run coal and nuclear plants that are being squeezed economically has earned a powerful supporter in President Donald Trump's orbit in the form of coal magnate Bob Murray, Pro's Darius Dixon and Eric Wolff [report](#). The proposal, which must be approved by FERC, would be mostly limited to plants in a stretch of the Midwest and Northeast where Murray's mining company, Murray Energy, is the predominant supplier. One stretch of the Rust Belt and Appalachia, overseen by an electricity market called the PJM Interconnection, accounts for roughly 44 percent of Murray's sales and Perry's rule was "certainly targeted at the PJM region," said Andy Ott, CEO of PJM.

An unlikely group of allies that includes environmental groups, the natural gas, wind and solar industries and the American Petroleum Institute has vocally opposed Perry's plan. "Customers get less than nothing while a few companies and their investors get a whole lot of something," Nora Mead Brownell, a Republican former electricity regulator, said of Perry's plan. "Money that gets spent there doesn't get invested in doing what you really need to do, which is upgrading the grid." Perry argues his proposal is an effort to ensure that the power network can withstand threats like terrorist attacks or severe weather.

Among the nation's roughly 280,000 megawatts of coal-fired power, Perry's rule is tightly written to affect only about 40,000 megawatts, according to POLITICO's analysis. Murray Energy acknowledged in written comments it has a "vital and critical interest" in whether the plan flies. "Given the current threats to those resources, Murray Energy, along with other coal producers and related industries ... is threatened with bankruptcy and significant economic harm if those resources are forced out of the market by unreasonable and unsupportable market pricing mechanisms," it wrote. Since Trump's swearing-in, Murray has made personal pleas for help in face-to-face meetings with Trump and DOE officials, including Perry and Brian McCormack, Perry's chief of staff.

WELCOME TO FRIDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and your state attorneys general turned senators are: Luther Strange, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tom Udall, John Cornyn, Kamala Harris, Heidi Heitkamp, Richard Blumenthal and Catherine Cortez Masto. For today: It was 60 years ago that the Russians sent the first animal into space. What was she and what was her name? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

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FOR YOUR AFTERNOON RADAR: Three major scientific reports acknowledging manmade climate change are expected to be released today by the Trump administration, Pro's Emily Holden reports. They include: two volumes of the National Climate Assessment and a draft of the State of the Carbon Cycle Report. The documents will go against numerous public statements by Trump Cabinet officials refusing to accept mainstream climate science.

OIL'S TAX WIN: Along with keeping most of their existing incentives, multinational oil companies won a new tax break that would cost the government nearly \$3.9 billion over the next decade in the latest GOP tax proposal. The House bill's elimination of a tax on "foreign base company oil related income" received relatively little attention in the initial flurry of tax-bill coverage Thursday, and it caught even some seasoned policy-watchers off guard. The tax typically applies to income from refineries, pipelines and other assets near multinational oil companies' overseas operations, according to a research note from ClearView Energy Partners. The industry has long complained that it is being treated unfairly compared to other types of industries, such as manufacturing. "FBCORI surprised us, but it appears to reinforce the pro-fossil bent of House Republican leadership," ClearView analysts wrote Thursday night.

Two thumbs up: The oil industry also loves the 20 percent corporate rate outlined in the proposal and is happy to see no changes to two provisions that favor its high-capital, low-operating-cost business model (the intangible drilling cost deduction and well depletion allowance, for those paying attention at home). Meanwhile, a pair of credits/deductions the House plan does jettison won't shave too much off the bottom line for most companies, industry folks tell ME. In a statement, API President Jack Gerard said "significant proposals, like lowering the corporate tax rate and strong cost-recovery provisions, will help ensure that our tax system is smart, fair and pro-growth to benefit American consumers, businesses, and the economy."

Horse-trading ahead: Release of the House bill is a starting point for tough negotiations in the weeks and months to come, in which energy provisions will, admittedly, play a relatively minor role. One House idea already encountering headwinds from the upper chamber is the proposal to slash the value of the production tax credit. "The wind energy production tax credit is already being phased out under a compromise brokered in 2015. It shouldn't be re-opened," Sen. Chuck Grassley said in a statement. "I'm working within the Senate Finance Committee to see that the commitment made to a multi-year phase-out remains intact."

FULL HOUSE: For the first time in more than two years, when Phil Moeller left the agency, FERC is on the path to having all five leadership seats filled again. Kevin McIntyre, President Donald Trump's pick to lead the agency, and Democratic commissioner Rich Glick, were confirmed Thursday afternoon. The pair still need to be officially sworn in to seal the deal, but they're both locals so we expect them to take the oath pretty soon. McIntyre and Glick have terms running through 2023 and 2022, respectively.

The hot potato: FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee passes the baton. During Kentucky native's brief tenure in the agency's center seat, Perry lobbed — as former FERC Chairman Pat Wood has called it — "a scud missile of the NOPR" at regulators, directing them to act on a controversial

plan to prop up coal and nuclear power plants. FERC is taking reply comments through Tuesday, and the agency is expected to stick to the Dec. 11 deadline to take some "final action." Given the particularly political lens FERC has been seen through over the past few months, FERC World will also be trying to read between the lines of McIntyre's staffing decisions and how he addresses the agency's independence.

Filling out DOE: The Senate sent Perry a few extra hands to run the Energy Department. Paul Dabbar and Mark Menezes were confirmed as undersecretaries of science and energy, respectively. Steven Winberg, Trump's pick to lead the agency's fossil energy office, also got a thumbs-up from lawmakers.

Attractions yet to come: William Wehrum's nomination to run EPA's air office may get a Senate floor vote as soon as next week after Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) filed cloture Thursday, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#).

Oh, and: Trump announced late Thursday his nomination of Linda Capuano, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy's Center for Energy Studies, to run the Energy Information Administration. She's previously been a vice president at both Marathon Oil Co. and Advanced Energy Industries. Biography [here](#).

SCIENCE CHAIRMAN CALLS IT QUILTS: Noting his House Science chairmanship runs out next year, [Lamar Smith announced](#) his retirement Thursday. Since ascending to the top of the science panel in 2013, the controversial Texan has [tussled](#) with academics, scientific organizations and government regulators, with Obama-era figures from the National Science Foundation, EPA and DOE among those who ended up in his crosshairs. The vocal climate science skeptic undermined the Obama administration's efforts to address climate change and elevated the minority of scientists who question that human activity drives the problem to equal footing as others. Pro's Darius Dixon has more [here](#).

Smith's take: "The time is the right time. No regrets. Well, I should quote Frank Sinatra in 'My Way' where he said 'regrets I have a few but too few to mention,'" he told reporters.

Science organizations and green groups welcome his exit: Andrew Rosenberg with the Union of Concerned Scientists expressed hope his exit would allow the science community to rebuild its relationship with Congress. "I hope that the next representative to serve as chair will return this committee to its intended purpose—strengthening America's scientific enterprise, providing thoughtful and constructive oversight of federal policy and protecting the health and safety of the people Congress is supposed to serve," he said.

Who might the next chairman be? Current Vice Chairman [Frank Lucas](#) didn't rule out a bid to succeed Smith but noted Financial Services Chairman [Jeb Hensarling](#) is also departing Congress. "Life's all about options, right?" he quipped to reporters.

IT'S LAW: Trump signed into law legislation [S. 190 \(115\)](#) that exempts certain equipment that needs to remain on at all times from energy use restrictions for an additional six years.

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE: Two corn-state Republican EPW senators — Deb Fischer and Joni Ernst — are publicly undecided about Kathleen Hartnett White's nomination to run the White House Council on Environmental Quality after meeting with her over past critical comments toward the Renewable Fuel Standard. "I am withholding judgement right now," Fischer told reporters Thursday. A spokeswoman for Ernst said she plans to ask additional questions on White's views at her Nov. 8 confirmation hearing. Remember: Just one Republican defection sinks a nomination in the tightly divided EPW panel.

What has White said about the RFS? She has been far more vocally opposed than even Bill Wehrum, whose selection to run the air office was briefly delayed over the issue. Back in July 2013, she wrote: "It is time to repeal the renewable fuel standard — not to expand or entrench this market distortion." White also wrote its importance to the Iowa presidential caucuses explains the durability of the "counterproductive and ethically dubious" RFS in her book. She's repeatedly argued biofuels are creating a "global food crisis" and urged Congress to end the program's "destructive food-as-fuel folly."

Fears of a repeat from some: Jim Inhofe told ME "there's reason to suspect" the bloc of biofuels backers might withhold support for White over her RFS stance and called their efforts to impede the Wehrum nomination "a little extreme." But Chairman John Barrasso, as always, projected confidence when asked if he worried they'd derail the confirmation process: "I'm committed to the president's nominees and we're going to go ahead with the hearing next week."

WITH SOME HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS: In the 24 hours before he sent his hotly anticipated national monument report to the White House, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke called just one non-GOP lawmaker — Maine Independent Sen. Angus King, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports, citing copies of Zinke's August and September calendars. Among those he called on Aug. 23 were Sens. Orrin Hatch, Dean Heller and Murkowski, Reps. Rob Bishop and Greg Walden, and the Republican governors of Utah, Maine and New Mexico.

Speaking of which, six green groups are suing Interior and the White House Council on Environmental Quality for copies of Zinke's national monuments report and related review records. The suit, filed Thursday by Earthjustice on behalf of the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society and three other groups, say the agency has not responded to their public records requests.

MORE QUESTIONS ON WHITEFISH: Senate Homeland Security ranking member Claire McCaskill released a set of letters to FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers and Whitefish Energy seeking additional information on the now-cancelled grid restoration contract. Among other things, she alleges the Puerto Rican utility may have already used FEMA funds to pay Whitefish, notes the Army Corps also considered using the tiny Montana-based company and questions a similar \$200 million contract with Oklahoma-based Cobra Acquisitions.

9/11 invoked in EPA's Puerto Rican response: New York Rep. Jerry Nadler slammed EPA's assurances that drinking water around Superfund sites in Puerto Rico is safe to drink as "eerily similar" to the agency's response following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "This is exactly what we got from EPA after 9/11... and thousands of people are sick and hundreds of people are dead

because [air quality levels] weren't fine. And that's why I'm skeptical," he said. Video [here](#).

MAIL CALL! GET SERIOUS ABOUT TRANSPORTATION-RELATED EMISSIONS:

The New England Power Generators Association, along with several environmental and science groups, asked four governors — Massachusetts' Charlie Baker, Connecticut's Dan Malloy, Rhode Island's Gina Raimondo and Vermont's Phil Scott — to develop and implement a "regional, market-based policy" to address greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. Letter link [here](#).

Waiver please? Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf asked Pruitt in a [letter](#) Thursday to waive RFS volume requirements. "I request that you reduce the 2017 and 2018 volumes to a level that avoids the severe economic harm experienced by the Northeast region of the United States as a result of the high costs of purchasing RINs to comply with the RFS," he wrote.

Higher park fees? Please no! Ninety House Democrats, led by Arizona's [Tom O'Halleran](#), sent Zinke a [letter](#) Thursday urging him not to follow through with plans to raise entrance fees to 17 national parks. "Raising the entrance fees to these popular destinations will make our public lands inaccessible to hardworking families, and it will devastate tribal and rural economies that support tourism," they wrote.

NEW SCIENTIST WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE LAUNCHED: 314 Action invited 36,638 government scientists at EPA, NASA and the National Science Foundation to anonymously report examples of science being undermined. Website with more information [here](#).

PRICE SHOCKER! Resources for the Future released a study Thursday finding releases from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve can have substantial effects on oil prices and spreads. Link [here](#).

POINTS FOR HONESTY: Via Rolling Stone's [Matt Laslo](#): "I don't think frankly that you need an EPA period," Rep. [Liz Cheney](#) tells me... "98% of the environmental regulation being done effectively at the state level that's where it ought to be," Cheney continued

WHO'S GRAMIN': Jack Gerard, the president and chief executive of the American Petroleum Institute, has joined Instagram, which the association says makes him the first head of a Washington trade group who's active on the platform. You can check out his Instas of children and the Oval Office [here](#) (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS:

— The Puerto Rico Contract's Lack Of Transparency? It's Not Unusual. [International Business Times](#).

— EPA's Pruitt and staff to attend chemical industry meeting at luxury resort next week. [Washington Post](#).

— Clash emerges over Puerto Rico power restoration. [AP](#).

— Kentucky coal report shows no sustained job rebound so far under Trump. Lexington Herald-Leader.

— US coal's upturn favours open-pit mines in western states. Financial Times.

— Trump Team to Promote Fossil Fuels and Nuclear Power at Bonn Climate Talks. New York Times.

HAPPENING TODAY

12:30 p.m. — "Dr. Ben Zaitchik on Water, Food, and Energy in the Eastern Nile Basin," Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies , 1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Rome Auditorium

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/11/murray-benefits-big-league-under-perry-grid-plan-025368>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Major climate science reports coming Friday Back

By Emily Holden | 11/02/2017 06:19 PM EDT

The Trump administration will release three major scientific reports on Friday acknowledging manmade climate change, according to a source familiar with the studies.

The U.S. Global Change Research Program will publish two volumes of the National Climate Assessment, which is required by law to be issued every four years and expected in late 2018. The first volume is a final version of the Climate Science Special Report. The second is a draft for public comment that focuses on impacts of climate change on humans and the environment.

USGCRP also will post a draft of the State of the Carbon Cycle Report, a supporting document.

An early version of the science report, published by the New York Times in August, found that human activity is the driving force behind increasing temperatures that are already intensifying extreme weather and causing sea-level rise.

The reports will contradict President Donald Trump and cabinet officials like EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Energy Secretary Rick Perry, who have expressed doubts about mainstream climate science. Some green advocates had worried the administration might suppress the research.

The source told POLITICO that the reports, which include the work of multiple agencies and are reviewed by outside scientists, are expected to stick to the science, avoiding discussions of politics or mitigation policies.

USGCRP was not available to comment.

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House tax bill slashes value of wind energy tax credit [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 11/02/2017 02:20 PM EDT

The House tax bill released Thursday would substantially reduce the value of a key wind energy incentive, tighten requirements on what renewable energy companies have to do to qualify for tax credits, extend a nuclear energy tax break, and restore support for clean energy technologies that had been "orphaned" from an earlier tax extenders law.

The bill also eliminates an electric vehicle tax credit and jettisons some little-used oil industry tax breaks — as well as getting rid of the more significant domestic production tax deduction enjoyed by oil companies and other manufacturers.

The wind industry was quick to condemn the changes to its tax treatment.

"Despite comments to the contrary, this proposal reneges on the tax reform deal that was already agreed to, and would impose a retroactive tax hike on an entire industry," Tom Kiernan, CEO of the American Wind Energy Association, said in a statement. "The House proposal would pull the rug out from under 100,000 U.S. wind workers and 500 American factories, including some of the fastest growing jobs in the country. We expect members of the House and Senate to oppose any proposal that fails to honor that commitment, and we will fight hard to see that wind energy continues to work for America."

Here are some highlights from the [text](#) and a [section-by-section summary](#) provided by the Ways and Means committee.

— **PTC cutbacks:** The bill would reduce the value of the Production Tax Credit to 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour, the level it was set at in 1992, rather than indexing it for inflation. That would reduce its value far beyond the terms of a tax credit phase-out that was implemented with bipartisan support in 2015. Wind farms and other eligible projects that begin construction this year can now claim a 1.9 cents/kWh credit, down from 2.3 cents/kWh for projects that started last year. The credit is scheduled to disappear for projects built after 2019 under current law, a schedule maintained in the House bill.

Developers also would face tougher requirements to claim the credit, the value of which is

determined by when construction begins. The House bill requires a "continuous program of construction" until a facility comes online in order to qualify for the credit, eliminating provisions of existing law that allow developers to make "safe harbor" investments to qualify. The Joint Committee on Taxation says eliminating the inflation-adjustment and tightening the construction requirements will save \$12.3 billion over 10 years, according to the bill summary.

— **ITC repealed after 2027, orphan credits revived** : The House bill extends the investment tax credit for a set of "orphaned" technologies left out of the 2015 legislation phasing out the ITC and PTC over five years. Fuel cells, small wind turbines, combined heat and power systems and microturbines can now claim the ITC until Jan. 1, 2022, with the credits phasing down at the same rate as the solar ITC. But what was to be a permanent 10 percent tax credit for solar investments will now terminate at the end of 2026. The House bill includes similar "continuous construction" requirements for the ITC as for the PTC. The changes would cost the government \$1.2 billion in reduced revenues over 10 years, according to JCT estimates cited in the bill summary.

— **Advanced nuclear tax credit extended**: The bill extends a tax credit for advanced nuclear projects, allowing the secretary of Treasury to transfer unused credits after 2020, which was the in-service deadline under current law. The extension has long been a priority for South Carolina Republican Sens. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott, among others. The credits would cost \$400 million over 10 years.

— **Utilities keep interest deduction**: The bill would change how much loan interest some businesses can deduct from their taxes, while allowing them to take advantage of full expensing of capital investments. However, it excludes regulated utilities from the new rules, providing a win for the industry. Eric Grey, director of government relations for the Edison Electric Institute, a trade group, told POLITICO in September that losing the interest tax deduction was a major concern for utilities. Overall, JCT estimates the deduction-and-expensing changes would save the government \$172 billion over 10 years.

— **No more 199**: The House bill would eliminate the domestic manufacturing credit known as section 199. Current law allows certain oil and gas companies to claim a 6 percent tax deduction, and other manufacturers can claim a 9 percent deduction, but the House bill would strip section 199 from the tax code starting next year. Doing so would save \$95.2 billion over 10 years.

— **Minor oil credits repealed**: The bill repeals two small oil industry credits that have barely been used because they only kick in when commodity prices are low. Repealing the enhanced oil recovery credit would cost the government about \$200 million over 10 years, while eliminating the marginal well production credit would have no effect on revenues.

— **EVs lose credit**: The bill repeals a \$7,500 tax credit for electric vehicles. It is part of a slew of tax credits, along with a mortgage credit, and an adoption credit, that the bill proposes repealing. Repealing all of the credits would save \$4 billion over 10 years, but the summary does not include a JCT estimate for the electric vehicle credit alone.

— **Biodiesel, CCS missing**: An expired biodiesel blenders credit was not restored, something

likely to become an issue in the Senate where Sen. [Chuck Grassley](#) wants it revived as a producers credit; and a credit for carbon capture and sequestration did not get in the text, despite having bipartisan support.

To view online [click here](#).

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Senate tees up Wehrum vote next week [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 11/02/2017 05:56 PM EDT

Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) filed cloture today on William Wehrum's nomination to run EPA's air office, setting up a floor vote for as early as next week.

Wehrum's committee vote last week was held up briefly over a spat between corn-state Republicans and an EPA proposal to weaken biodiesel mandates. EPA subsequently promised not to roll back the mandates and Wehrum cleared committee on an 11-10 party-line vote.

It is not clear precisely when the Wehrum vote will occur.

McConnell also filed cloture on nominees to the Transportation Department, Justice Department and National Labor Relations Board. A vote on the DOJ nominee is slated for noon on Tuesday.

To view online [click here](#).

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Lamar Smith won't seek reelection to House [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 11/02/2017 03:40 PM EDT

Rep. Lamar Smith, the controversial chairman of the House Science Committee, announced Thursday that he will leave Congress when his term ends in 2018.

The 16-term Texas Republican is one of the longest-serving members of the state's congressional delegation, and has often tussled with academics, scientific organizations and government regulators since become Science chairman in 2013. In a letter to constituents, Smith said there were several reasons he is choosing not to seek reelection next year, including that he will complete his term as chairman of the House Science Committee. Smith said he is looking forward to spending more time with his grandchildren, and "I hope to find other ways to stay involved in politics."

This year, Smith has been instrumental in [resurfacing](#) old allegations about Russian efforts to

fund activists opposed to oil and gas drilling, an effort critics say is designed to distract from controversy over whether any members of President Donald Trump's campaign were involved with Russia's efforts to disrupt last year's election. On Tuesday, he wrote to executives at Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet requesting information about Russian purchases of anti-fracking ads on social media platforms.

Smith said he looks forward to staying busy.

"With over a year remaining in my term, there is still much to do," he wrote in the letter Thursday. "There is legislation to enact, dozens of hearings to hold, and hundreds of votes to cast."

During the Obama administration, officials at the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Department all found themselves in Smith's cross-hairs. The 69-year-old lawmaker, who previously chaired the House Judiciary Committee, also made regular attempts to expand his committee's jurisdiction over cybersecurity to launch far-reaching probes targeting the New York Federal Reserve, Healthcare.gov and the companies that provided software to Hillary Clinton's email server.

He antagonized the broader science community when he touted a number of NSF grants as "frivolous" and sought to restructure how different areas of science were funded by the federal government.

Smith has also used his perch on the Science panel to undermine the Obama administration's efforts to address climate change, elevating several global warming skeptics to question the agreement among the vast majority of climate scientists that humans are the main driver of the phenomenon.

Smith's 21st District, which takes in parts of Austin and San Antonio as well as rural counties to the west, has been solidly Republican in the past. Mitt Romney won nearly 60 percent of the vote there in 2012.

But Trump got 52 percent to Hillary Clinton's 42 percent in the district in 2016, and several Democrats saw an opportunity to challenge Smith before he announced his retirement. One Democrat, veteran Joseph Kopser, outraised Smith in the third quarter and has over \$219,000 in his campaign account.

"The people of Texas are losing a dedicated public servant and skilled legislator, but we are confident they will select another conservative Republican like Chairman Smith who shares their values," said National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Steve Stivers (R-Ohio).

Smith's relationship with Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, the top Democrat on the Science Committee and a fellow Texan, has been rocky for years. Both lawmakers are soft-spoken and have served together in Congress for more than two decades. But Johnson has accused Smith of bringing "disrepute to our institution" and turning his panel into "little more than an arm of the Republican National Committee," particularly when he started issuing subpoenas in 2013, the

first in 21 years.

Smith has subpoenaed the EPA for health data used for clean air regulations, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the suspicion that a scientific paper on climate change was mishandled.

Scott Bland and John Bresnahan contributed to this report.

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Lamar Smith plows through criticism to create 'activist' Science Committee [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 08/12/2016 05:03 AM EDT

The escalating subpoena showdown between Rep. [Lamar Smith](#) and two state attorneys general is the culmination of a long-running effort by the Science chairman to assert unclaimed territory and turn a once-sleepy panel into an investigative powerhouse.

The Texas Republican, who took over as chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee in 2013, has tried to shift federal science dollars toward basic research and away from ambitious efforts to reshape the energy system that he feels the private sector should be tackling instead. But Smith has earned more attention for a series of confrontations with scientists, activists and public officials that have raised the public profile of what has traditionally been a B-list committee.

Smith accuses the Obama administration and environmental activists of politicizing scientists' findings about climate change in an effort to expand the size of government and more aggressively regulate businesses. Democrats say Smith is doing the bidding of his donors in the fossil fuel industry to shield companies from having to pay to reduce their carbon emissions.

The National Science Foundation, NOAA, EPA and the Energy Department all have found themselves in Smith's crosshairs, and the 69-year-old lawmaker has seized on his jurisdiction over cybersecurity to launch far-reaching probes targeting the New York Federal Reserve, Healthcare.gov and the companies that provided software to Hillary Clinton's email server.

When Congress reconvenes next month, Smith will have to decide whether to escalate his showdown with the AGs of New York and Massachusetts, both of whom [rejected subpoenas](#) from Smith seeking records related to their own [investigations](#) into whether ExxonMobil misled the public about climate change. Smith also has subpoenaed several nonprofit groups who worked with the AGs. The chairman acknowledges his request is likely unprecedented but says his goal is to protect scientists from political interference.

"It's bigger than Exxon. It's the whole idea of trying to silent dissent and trying to silent what I

consider to be legitimate scientific skepticism maybe," Smith told POLITICO last month in a wide-ranging interview in his personal office. "But they clearly are trying to intimidate individuals and trying to stop them from claiming that the science is not settled and that's about as basic as it comes when you talk about academic freedom, scientific right of speech or whatever."

Smith's critics argue that it's the chairman who is guilty of using intimidation tactics.

"He's using the chairmanship of the Science Committee, in my view, not only in a very partisan way but as a political tool, not really in consultation with or listening to the science community," said Andrew Rosenberg, a former regional administrator at NOAA and professor of natural resources at the University of New Hampshire.

"He's basically turned the entire discussion around the Exxon issue on its head," added Rosenberg, who now directs the Center for Science and Democracy with the Union of Concerned Scientists, which is refusing to comply with a subpoena from Smith. "That somehow we, the Union of Concerned Scientists and other organizations and state attorneys general, are trying to stifle scientific speech when in fact what we are saying is that Exxon did that — they suppressed the science that they had internally."

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, a fellow Texan, has excoriated Smith's work from her post as the panel's top Democrat.

Both lawmakers are soft-spoken and have served together in Congress for more than two decades, which makes her criticism all the more biting. In a series of dismissive letters and statements challenging his various investigations, Johnson has accused Smith of bringing "disrepute to our institution" and turning his panel into "little more than an arm of the Republican National Committee."

Johnson first felt that Smith was veering off-course in 2013 when he issued the committee's first subpoena in 21 years, hoping to get the EPA to turn over health data it used for its clean air regulations even though the agency said the information belonged to Harvard and the American Cancer Society.

Last year, Smith subpoenaed records from NOAA under the suspicion that a scientific paper refuting a widely touted "hiatus" in global warming was mishandled because it did not incorporate satellite data. Smith accused the agency of relying on "clearly cherry-picked" data to produce "politically correct science." Smith says an anonymous whistleblower told the committee the paper was rushed and the episode has made him question the peer review process at Science, which has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the most respected journals.

NOAA says the paper's nine authors did not incorporate satellite measurements because they were studying a dataset of land stations, ships and buoys at sea, and 23 former NOAA scientists, who have collectively worked under every president since Richard Nixon, say Smith's charge is baseless. Moreover, after corrections were made to satellite data this spring, they too refuted the hiatus, although there's still debate over the degree of warming. There also haven't been any

complaints filed with NOAA's anonymous scientific integrity system, the agency said.

Smith's critics say the episode exemplifies the chilling effect that such inquiries can have on the scientific community.

"Anybody can look at the paper, the methods and the data, and the results. And they can disagree with them or can come up with a different analysis — knock yourself out. That's the scientific process," Rosenberg said. "Now, we're going to investigate somebody's emails because you didn't like the answer? Tell them to take a month out of their time, compile everything you've ever written with the word 'climate' in it? That's not supporting the science work of the country."

Given the long odds of Democrats flipping control of the House next year, Smith is likely to return to his post, where he is eligible for one more term as chairman under party rules and could try to stretch his portfolio even further.

"Certainly, we are taking initiatives that haven't been taken on before, but I feel like I'm in Congress to do more than just vote," Smith said in the interview. "I want to maximize the potential of the committee, simple as that. And one way to maximize the potential is to explore the jurisdiction that we have."

Those following the Science Committee scratched their heads when Smith pinged the New York Fed about a [Bangladeshi "cyberheist,"](#) subpoenaed Healthcare.gov, and sent letters to companies involved with the server Hillary Clinton used while secretary of State.

But the Science Committee has jurisdiction over federal cybersecurity programs as well as cyber standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

People weren't thinking about cybersecurity 15 years ago, said David Stonner, who led NSF's congressional affairs for 16 years. "And the fact that it has become a huge issue opens the door for whoever on the Hill wants to be responsible for oversight of this issue, rather than oversight of just an agency."

Smith says he takes a special point of pride in all the buzz around the committee's work.

"I will say that one of my goals when I became chairman was to make the committee a committee that attracted members — that people wanted to be a part of what we were doing," Smith said. When he took over the panel, he said, it was the first time in 20 years that there were more Republican lawmakers who wanted to be on the committee than there were spots for.

Rep. [Randy Weber](#), a two-term Texas Republican who chairs a Science subcommittee, was attracted to Smith's panel by an opportunity to represent his constituents who work at NASA's nearby Johnson Space Center and to scrutinize activities across the federal government.

"Chairman Smith does a great job attracting new members, because he gives every member an opportunity to take a leading role in committee action," Weber said in an emailed statement. Smith, he added, "consistently reinforces the principle of good governance and fiscal

responsibility over the federal agencies the committee oversees."

Johnson, on the other hand, is convinced that Smith has driven the committee off the reservation.

"I don't expect that we're going to agree on everything. But it's really not a political committee," said Johnson, who has served on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in addition to the science panel over her nearly 24 years in Congress. "For the most part I'd bragged for all these years that I was on two committees that didn't get into the politics and would stick to the issues. ... I can no longer say that."

For all his activism, Smith is not one to display a bombastic personality. He doesn't raise his voice and says that he doesn't let the many critiques of his leadership sink in.

Oddly enough, Smith has an unlikely advocate on the Science Committee: Rep. Alan Grayson, a controversial left-wing Senate candidate uninhibited in his criticisms of Republicans.

"The chairman is a fair-minded, honest person," the Florida Democrat said of Smith. "In his heart he is a legislator, not an ideologue."

Smith appears to be a man who truly loves science — he draws inspiration from an "ultra-deep" field photograph of galaxies taken by the Hubble Space Telescope hanging near his desk, and talks fondly of taking physics and astronomy in college — but the Texan is considerably out of step with the larger science community on climate change.

He considers himself a "climate skeptic" who wants more detail in the science behind global warming — a position that distinguishes him from someone like GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump, who dismisses the issue as a hoax.

"I think human activity does have an impact on climate," Smith said. "I don't think we know exactly how much of an impact and I think that is a separate legitimate debate despite what some people might suggest."

To Smith, in clamoring for government programs to reduce carbon emissions, policymakers have lost faith in technology.

"Throughout our nation's history technology has always solved our problems and why suddenly now we don't think technology will solve our problems, I don't know," he said, adding that he supports more spending on R&D for "coming up with technological breakthroughs to address climate change."

Alongside his battle with NOAA, Smith ruffled feathers in the broader science community when he touted a number of NSF grants as "frivolous."

"The purpose of the science committees should be to help research progress, to get the barriers out of the way, not to generate barriers," said Rush Holt, a physicist and former Democratic congressman who is the CEO for the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Holt, who said he didn't have "personal bone to pick" with Smith, said, "it was not lost on the science community that the House Science Committee, several times in the couple of years, has substituted political opinion for peer review."

Basic R&D is the bread-and-butter issue of the Science Committee, and Smith's support of it isn't unusual for a Republican. But he still managed to ruffle the ranks of the science community last year in his efforts to renew the America COMPETES Act, a major piece of research legislation. The bill cut spending levels for renewables and earth science, parceled out funds depending on preferred fields and would require NSF grants to include an explanation of why they're in the "national interest."

Smith and his staff say that Congress has a responsibility to set priorities, and to some degree believe previous Science committee leaders have treated the science community with kid gloves even though most of them are accepting taxpayer cash.

"I think that there was initially pushback by academics and other researchers because they weren't used to anybody conducting any kind of oversight as to how the taxpayer dollars were being spent," Smith said. "And I consider that ... to be my obligation and responsibility."

A member of Smith's staff put it more bluntly: "Back in the good old days, very often, chairmen of the Science Committee were shoveling gold off the stagecoach. We're not in that era right now. We're in an era of very tight fiscal constraints and in general, if you can maintain the fraction of the federal spending dollars that basic research gets, it's a win every year."

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Lamar Smith won't seek reelection to House [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 11/02/2017 03:49 PM EDT

Rep. [Lamar Smith](#), the controversial chairman of the House Science Committee, announced Thursday that he will leave Congress when his term ends in 2018.

The 16-term Texas Republican is one of the longest-serving members of the state's congressional delegation, and has often [tussled](#) with academics, scientific organizations and government regulators since become Science chairman in 2013. In a letter to constituents, Smith said there were several reasons he is choosing not to seek reelection next year, including that he will complete his term as chairman of the House Science Committee. Smith said he is looking forward to spending more time with his grandchildren, and "I hope to find other ways to stay involved in politics."

This year, Smith has been instrumental in [resurfacing](#) old allegations about Russian efforts to

fund activists opposed to oil and gas drilling, an effort critics say is designed to distract from controversy over whether any members of President Donald Trump's campaign were involved with Russia's efforts to disrupt last year's election. On Tuesday, he wrote to executives at Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet requesting information about Russian purchases of anti-fracking ads on social media platforms.

Smith said he looks forward to staying busy.

"With over a year remaining in my term, there is still much to do," he wrote in the letter Thursday. "There is legislation to enact, dozens of hearings to hold, and hundreds of votes to cast."

During the Obama administration, officials at the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Department all found themselves in Smith's cross-hairs. The 69-year-old lawmaker, who previously chaired the House Judiciary Committee, also made regular attempts to expand his committee's jurisdiction over cybersecurity to launch far-reaching probes targeting the New York Federal Reserve, Healthcare.gov and the companies that provided software to Hillary Clinton's email server.

He antagonized the broader science community when he touted a number of NSF grants as "frivolous" and sought to restructure how different areas of science were funded by the federal government.

Smith has also used his perch on the Science panel to undermine the Obama administration's efforts to address climate change, elevating several global warming skeptics to question the agreement among the vast majority of climate scientists that humans are the main driver of the phenomenon.

Smith's 21st District, which takes in parts of Austin and San Antonio as well as rural counties to the west, has been solidly Republican in the past. Mitt Romney won nearly 60 percent of the vote there in 2012.

But Trump got 52 percent to Hillary Clinton's 42 percent in the district in 2016, and several Democrats saw an opportunity to challenge Smith before he announced his retirement. One Democrat, veteran Joseph Kopser, outraised Smith in the third quarter and has over \$219,000 in his campaign account.

"The people of Texas are losing a dedicated public servant and skilled legislator, but we are confident they will select another conservative Republican like Chairman Smith who shares their values," said National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Steve Stivers (R-Ohio).

Smith' relationship with Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, the top Democrat on the Science Committee and a fellow Texan, has been rocky for years. Both lawmakers are soft-spoken and have served together in Congress for more than two decades. But Johnson has accused Smith of bringing "disrepute to our institution" and turning his panel into "little more than an arm of the Republican National Committee," particularly when he started issuing subpoenas in 2013, the

first in 21 years.

Smith has subpoenaed the EPA for health data used for clean air regulations, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the suspicion that a scientific paper on climate change was mishandled.

Scott Bland and John Bresnahan contributed to this report.

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Calendar: Zinke primarily called GOP lawmakers, governors ahead of sending monuments report [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 11/02/2017 07:20 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke called mostly Republican lawmakers and governors the day before he sent his national monument report to the White House, according to copies of Zinke's [August](#) and [September](#) calendars the Interior Department released today.

Zinke's calls on Aug. 23 included Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#), [Orrin Hatch](#) and [Dean Heller](#), Reps. [Rob Bishop](#) and [Greg Walden](#), and the governors of Utah, Maine and New Mexico, among others. Sen. [Angus King](#) (I-Maine) was the only non-Republican to receive a call that day, less than 24 hours before Zinke [submitted](#) his draft monument recommendations. Zinke met earlier in the month with Democratic Sens. [Ron Wyden](#) and [Jeff Merkley](#).

White House officials involved in the monument discussions included energy advisor Mike Catanzaro, Intergovernmental Affairs Director Justin Clark, Domestic Policy Council Director Andrew Bromberg, Cabinet Secretary Bill McGinley and White House deputy chief of staff Rick Dearborn, according to Zinke's calendar entries.

The calendar also showed that Zinke was off for two weeks earlier in August, just before the report was due. The secretary's wife, Lolita, posted photos to social media of the couple vacationing in the Mediterranean, drawing flak from [critics](#) who said he was not sufficiently focused on the monument review.

Only a few meetings were listed in August and September involving energy issues including one with oil and gas exploration company Hilcorp Energy CEO Jeffrey Hildebrand and some on more general topics such as sage grouse in early August and another on "solar emphasis areas" in early September.

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Sent: Tue 3/13/2018 9:47:30 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Special election overtakes coal country — Zinke heads to the Hill — Bishop calls out PREPA

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 03/13/2018 05:45 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Ben Lefebvre and Daniel Lippman

IT'S SPECIAL ELECTION DAY: Voters in southeastern Pennsylvania will pick their new member of Congress today, and Democrats are hoping for a surprise upset in the coal country district that President Donald Trump won handily. The 18th District special election pits Republican Rick Saccone and Democrat Conor Lamb, and the latest polls show Lamb leading in the heavily blue-collar area, left open by the resignation of Republican incumbent Rep. Tim Murphy. Trump carried the district by 20 points in 2016.

On energy issues, Lamb lists "modern energy development" as one of his priorities, with calls for increased natural gas-extraction jobs. Lamb says government should not impede energy development and job creation, according to his website, but notes the need for government "to enforce the law and hold companies accountable if they endanger workers or pollute our air or water." For his part, Saccone hasn't laid out his energy priorities on his campaign site, but he's previously touted coal production and hit EPA for its regulations during his time as a state lawmaker.

Lamb, a Marine and former federal prosecutor, spent Sunday with the United Mine Workers of America, where he spoke directly to retired coal miners on pensions and Social Security, the Associated Press reported. "People have paid into these programs over the course of a lifetime," Laid said, some 40 miles outside of Pittsburgh. "I do not believe, as [House Speaker] Paul Ryan does, that these are entitlements or another form of welfare."

Meanwhile, Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, garnered support from the president, who stumped for him at a Saturday rally and tweeted another endorsement Monday morning. "Let's get someone from the heart of coal country, supporting your families, values and concerns," Saccone said of himself, before the president arrived Saturday. "I'm battle-tested and ready to serve." Saccone also joined Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke last month at an event just outside the district to announce new grants to clean up coal mines in the state, an appearance that has led Democrats to call for an investigation into whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act.

For Lamb to win the toss-up race, he'll need to run up his totals in Allegheny County, where Pittsburgh bleeds into the suburbs, Campaign Pro's Elena Schneider reports. The Democrat has spent a lot of time in Greene County, home to coal miners who were "really anti-Hillary," but are "open to Conor," said Rich Yakubic, a 67-year-old member of the UMWA, who attended Lamb's rally Sunday. Elena breaks down what else to watch tonight here.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and the Renewable Fuels

Association's Rachel Gantz was first to know former President Calvin Coolidge never used a telephone while in office. For today: Who was the only president to have no turnover in his Cabinet? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](https://twitter.com/kelseytam), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

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ZINKE HEADS TO THE HILL: Zinke heads to Capitol Hill today for a Senate Energy hearing on the administration's fiscal 2019 budget proposal for DOI. Democrats will likely ask Zinke about his use of public funds, as well as reports of conflicts of interest for the former Montana congressman. Expect Democrats to also press the secretary on the state of Interior's offshore drilling plan, and whether public input at his agency is being heard. **If you go:** The hearing begins at 10 a.m. in 336 Dirksen. Watch it here.

NO SYMPOSIUM FOR ZINKE: Interior has canceled Zinke's appearance at the Energy & Environmental Symposium scheduled for Wednesday, event organizer Faegre Baker Daniels confirmed. The cancellation also comes after questions were raised about Faegre's lobbying for the reduction of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah on behalf of energy companies. Faegre is also where Andrew Wheeler — Trump's stalled pick for EPA's No. 2 spot — works as a principal. For those still jonesing for a Zinke fix after today's hearing, the secretary is scheduled to testify to the House Natural Resources Committee at 10 a.m. Thursday.

Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash will speak in Zinke's place Wednesday, a Faegre spokeswoman said. Updated guidance can be found here.

WHITEHOUSE HITS 200: Seventeen Democratic senators, including Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, will join Sheldon Whitehouse today as he delivers his 200th weekly address to the upper chamber. Since April 2012, Whitehouse has delivered remarks from the floor every week on various aspects of man-made climate change.

**** A message from Chevron:** At our Refinery Optimization Center in El Segundo, we're using advanced technologies to help monitor operations and deliver safer energy. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2Ge73Qw> **

HOUSE COMMITTEE CALLS OUT PREPA: The House Natural Resources Committee sent a letter to Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority's interim executive director on Monday, outlining recent allegations of "corruption and gross mismanagement" with the island's power restoration operations. "A member of the committee has heard from constituents currently working to restore power in Puerto Rico under [agreements with other electric utilities], that utility crews are delayed or unable to complete electrification projects because of a lack of materials" from PREPA, says the letter, signed by Chairman Rob Bishop and Republicans Bruce Westerman and Doug LaMalfa.

The letter cites an incident in which FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel

raided a warehouse storing repair materials that PREPA did not acknowledge existed, Pro's Colin Wilhelm [reports](#). Local media in Puerto Rico have also alleged that PREPA officials received bribes from local strip club owners to give them priority in power restoration, and ordered power restored to their own homes before other critical infrastructure. The lawmakers, whose panel has jurisdiction over Puerto Rico and other territories, want more information from PREPA about any open investigations it has into alleged misappropriation of resources or bribery by March 26. Read it [here](#).

Meanwhile in the Virgin Islands: FEMA recommitted Monday to complete its long-haul response in the U.S. Virgin Islands, following damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria to the islands last summer. "We will be on the job until the territory tells us we've completed our work," said William Vogel, who serves as FEMA's coordinator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Read more [here](#) from Pro's Quint Forgey.

GOP WON'T BLOCK TARIFFS: Don't expect Republicans to do anything about the steel and aluminum tariffs they've spent the better half of the month worrying about — at least for now. GOP leaders signaled Monday that they won't try to pass legislation to override a president of their own party, POLITICO's Burgess Everett [reports](#). Instead, they are hoping they can get the president to water down the tariffs, which have drawn condemnation from many in the energy industry. "That's clearly a long shot. But we're trying as best we can to persuade folks in the administration to scale this back to make it less harmful," said Sen. [John Thune](#), the No. 3 GOP senator. "I don't think we can rely on Democrats. And moving something across the floor takes 60. And then you'd have to override a veto."

EPA SPARES PHILLY REFINER IN BANKRUPTCY SETTLEMENT: EPA will allow bankrupt refinery Philadelphia Energy Solutions to meet only a portion of its outstanding obligation under the Renewable Fuel Standard as part of a [settlement filed](#) with the Bankruptcy Court in Delaware Monday. PES has blamed its financial failure on the RFS, and its bankruptcy spurred a series of meetings at the White House about how to resolve tensions between biofuel producers and some oil refiners over the program. In the future, PES will be expected to submit credits every six months, instead of annually. Reuters first broke the [news](#) of the settlement.

"EPA's action in the PES case just demonstrate the Agency's acknowledgement that RINs are the primary cause of PES' bankruptcy and the main impediment to its future viability," a refining source who is concerned about high compliance costs tells ME. The source added that the settlement does not change the need for substantial changes to the program in order to prevent PES from being "right back in the soup" next year.

Biofuels producers are irate. "We are evaluating the settlement and will comment on the proposal," Bob Dinneen, CEO of the Renewable Fuels Association, told ME in a statement. "But at first blush, this strikes us as rewarding bombast behavior and it sets an extraordinarily bad precedent."

ROUNDTABLE ROUND-UP: With stacks of his "[year in review](#)" document piled high, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt held a "[regional roundtable](#)" with reporters Monday morning to discuss the year ahead and his achievements to date. Here are some of the stories that emerged

from the roundtable:

— Pruitt said he would sign a waiver allowing blends of 15 percent ethanol gasoline if he can do so legally, via the [Houston Chronicle](#).

— By month's end, Pruitt plans to have reviewed about 400 claims filed over damages sustained during the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster, via [The Denver Post](#).

— In states like Nevada, Pruitt touted the need for regulatory rollbacks to help economically, via the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#).

— A final move on Missouri's West Lake Superfund site could include excavating more than the 67 percent of the site, via the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

STATES CONTINUE THE FIGHT: The fight over Zinke's offshore drilling plan continues to play out on the state level, with officials vowing to fight the proposal by any means necessary, POLITICO New York's Danielle Muoio and Marie French report. Lawmakers hailing from California to New York are considering ways to block the proposal, the pair reports, including "laws to block the construction of pipelines or infrastructure in state-controlled waters that are needed to support drilling projects." Attorneys general have vowed to sue over Zinke's proposal at the earliest possible moment, while state agencies plan to object to any lease sales using their joint authority under federal law over coastal waters. Read more [here](#).

NELSON HOPES FOR NEW NASA PICK: With news of the acting head of NASA's retirement at the end of April, Florida Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) has called on the White House to re-do its nomination to head the agency permanently. "The White House needs to nominate a space professional for NASA administrator who will actually garner strong bipartisan support. The current nominee doesn't have the votes," Nelson said in a [statement](#) on Robert Lightfoot's retirement. Lightfoot led the agency while the Senate has failed to confirm the administration's permanent choice: Oklahoma Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#), who was formally nominated in September and has been unable to win Democratic support due in part to his denial of climate change.

ROCKEFELLER-BACKED GROUP RECOMMENDS ON POLICY: The Rockefeller Foundation-created initiative, 100 Resilient Cities, today released a series of recommendations in four policy areas, including infrastructure and flood insurance. The recommendations, which have been endorsed by mayors in Boston, Pittsburgh, Miami and Honolulu, outline specific strategies for improvement, including the creation of "a national infrastructure bank to further private investments in resilience," as well as a coordinated effort by departments and agencies to increase efficiency of disaster response, by integrating future forecast and scenario data and analysis into decision-making, among other ideas. Read it [here](#).

MAIL CALL! BRING BACK THE TAX CREDIT: Ahead of this week's Ways and Means [hearing](#) on tax extenders, the National Biodiesel Board, and 45 other groups, sent a letter to congressional leadership, calling for the reinstatement of the biodiesel tax credit for 2018. Read it [here](#).

HAPPY SUNSHINE WEEK: Nonprofit watchdog group Cause of Action Institute sent a letter to Zinke on Monday taking issue with a September report from BLM on improving planning and NEPA processes, which called for "expanded exemptions" under the Freedom of Information Act. CoA called on Interior to rescind the recommendation and "recommit itself to operating in an open and transparent fashion in accordance with the FOIA." Read it [here](#).

STATE NEWS — NEW JERSEY SETTLES WITH 3: New Jersey has reached settlements totaling \$196.5 million with three petroleum companies — Sunoco, BP and Shell — in a decade-long legal battle over pollution caused by the release of methyl tertiary-butyl ether, a fuel additive that contaminated groundwater throughout the state, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal announced Monday. The three petroleum companies have each agreed to pay over \$60 million to resolve liability for environmental damages caused by the additive, Danielle [reports](#). The state's lawsuit was filed in 2007.

MOVER, SHAKER: Diane Regas started Monday as president and CEO of the Trust for Public Land. She most recently was executive director of Environmental Defense Fund.

QUICK HITS

- Oil bust was actually good for a town called "shale city," [Bloomberg](#).
- Trump Jr., donor have longtime undisclosed ties, [Associated Press](#).
- BLM blames missing comments on technology 'breakdown,' [E&E News](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

8:30 a.m. — The Global CCS Institute holds [DC Forum on Carbon, Capture and Storage](#), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue

8:30 a.m. — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission holds its 30th annual [Regulatory Information Conference](#), North Bethesda, Md.

9:00 a.m. — [Solar Asset Management North America](#) will hold its fifth edition, San Francisco

9:00 a.m. — The Atlantic Council [discussion](#) on "Venezuela's Oil Industry: Can It Survive?" 1030 15th St NW

10:00 a.m. — Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy's 2018 [Energy Innovation Summit](#), National Harbor

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources [hearing](#) on the administration's FY 2019 budget request for Interior, 336 Dirksen

10:15 a.m. — Senate Judiciary Committee [hearing](#) on "The Freedom of Information Act: Examining the Administration's Progress on Reforms and Looking Ahead," 226 Dirksen

12:45 p.m. — Resources for the Future seminar on "Impacts of Lower Natural Gas Prices on Employment in the Manufacturing Sector," 1616 P St. NW

1:30 p.m. — U.S. Energy Association presentation on "Can algae really do CC?" 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW

6:00 p.m. — The Sunlight Foundation discussion on "The State of Environmental Transparency: When Political Interference Obstructs the Public's Right to Know," 1440 G Street NW

6:30 p.m. — John Cardinal Ribat of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, speaks to Congress on climate change, 650 Michigan Ave NE

7:00 p.m. — EnviroRun hosts David Herring, director of communications and education at NOAA's Climate Program Office, 1875 K St NW

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**** A message from Chevron:** With a live 24-hour monitoring system, an infrared Eye in the Sky, and a team stationed around-the-clock, our high-tech Refinery Optimization Center in El Segundo, CA helps us monitor thousands of devices and deliver safer, reliable energy. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2Ge73Qw> **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/special-election-overtakes-coal-country-129280>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Poll: Democrat Lamb leads in Pa. special election [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider and Steven Shepard | 03/12/2018 01:00 PM EDT

PITTSBURGH — Democrat Conor Lamb heads into the final day of the special congressional election in western Pennsylvania with the lead, according to a new public poll released Monday.

Monmouth University used three different turnout models ahead of Tuesday's special election — and Lamb has the advantage in all three of them.

Lamb is squaring off against Republican Rick Saccone, a state legislator and Air Force veteran in a traditionally blue-collar district that backed President Donald Trump by 20 points in 2016. They're competing to replace GOP Rep. Tim Murphy, who resigned in October.

Lamb leads Saccone, 51 percent to 45 percent, the poll shows — using a turnout model that mirrors a Democratic surge that's appeared in other special elections throughout the last year. Three percent of likely voters are undecided, and 1 percent would support another candidate.

A Monmouth poll released in mid-February, using the same model, found Saccone with a slight edge, 49 percent to 46 percent.

The poll suggests Lamb can win even if that Democratic surge falls short, however. In a more restrictive turnout model — designed to mirror a lower-turnout electorate that typically votes in midterm elections — Lamb has a slim, 2-point lead, 49 percent to 47 percent. A higher-turnout scenario, more similar to a presidential election, produces a 7-point Lamb lead, 51 percent to 44 percent.

"When added to a potential Democratic surge that has been building for weeks, Lamb appears to have picked off enough Republican-leaning voters to take a lead going into this contest's final weekend," said Monmouth University pollster Patrick Murray. "It would mark an extraordinary swing from Trump's nearly 20-point victory here in 2016 if he could hold on to win."

Lamb, a former federal prosecutor, is running as a centrist Democrat. He has called for new leadership in both parties and said he would oppose Nancy Pelosi as leader.

Saccone has frustrated national Republicans with his lackluster fundraising, which has forced outside groups like Congressional Leadership Fund and the National Republican Congressional Committee to dump more than \$10 million into the district.

Republicans used that money to accuse Lamb of being aligned with Pelosi and to attack his tenure as a federal prosecutor.

End Citizens United and VoteVets, both progressive groups, gave Lamb some cover on TV ads, totaling \$600,000.

Despite the barrage of attack ads, Lamb's negatives haven't ticked up significantly over the past few weeks, according to the poll. A majority of likely voters, 53 percent, have a favorable impression of Lamb, compared to 33 percent who view him unfavorably. Last month, Lamb's image rating stood at 49 percent favorable, versus 31 percent unfavorable.

Fewer voters, 47 percent, have a favorable opinion of Saccone, and 43 percent view him unfavorably.

The Monmouth poll was conducted March 8-11 — with most of the interviews coming before Trump's rally last Saturday night in the district. But the poll indicates Trump's backing of Saccone may be a wash for the Republican nominee.

Voters are evenly split on Trump: 49 percent approve his job performance, and the same percentage disapprove. The proportion of likely voters who strongly approve of Trump's job performance (39 percent) and strongly disapprove (41 percent) are also nearly identical.

At Saturday's rally for Saccone, Trump touted his recent decision to impose tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum. But voters in the district aren't convinced: 43 percent think the tariffs will

help the local economy, compared to 36 percent who think they will hurt.

And virtually every voter surveyed, 96 percent, said the tariff decision hasn't caused them to change their choice of candidate. Three percent said the tariffs make them more likely to vote for Saccone, while 1 percent said they are more likely to vote for Lamb.

"Voters are divided on the potential impact of tariffs. It doesn't seem that the president's gambit paid off in this race if that was his intent," said Murray. Still, he noted that the poll was taken largely before the rally "and we don't have a clear picture of what impact that might" have.

"A Saccone victory is still well within the poll's margin of error," Murray said, "especially if a Democratic surge does not materialize in the Pittsburgh suburbs."

The poll surveyed 372 likely voters — contacted via a list of voters in the district who have participated in at least one of the last four primary or general elections, plus recent registrants — and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.1 percentage points.

Steven Shepard contributed to this report from Arlington, Va.

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Republicans wage 11th-hour blitz in Pa. special election [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt | 03/12/2018 05:00 AM EDT

MOON TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multimillion-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-

up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly 2 to 1, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass-roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here, Cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from 4 percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close. "Our people get out, we win, and there's no problem."

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for their coverage of the race, saying they had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring Saccone's accomplishments.

"The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin résumé and trying to make it sound like it's something big, when I have a big résumé that they try and scrunch down and don't say anything about," he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a "really good person," told his supporters to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy," and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb's support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb's pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

"Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions," say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he "abandoned PA labor unions," who were "outraged" by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb "supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment."

As they funneled into Trump's rally on Saturday, some of the president's supporters conceded they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative district.

"I've seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood," said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

"A lot of people I've heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas," she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president's loyalists questioned whether Trump should skip the campaign event, worried that he'd take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

"If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president," said David Urban, who oversaw Trump's 2016 campaign in the state. "It reminds me of, 'Heads I lose, tails you win.'"

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Trump pushes support for Saccone a day before election [Back](#)

By Rebecca Morin | 03/12/2018 11:39 AM EDT

President Donald Trump on Monday reinforced his endorsement for Rick Saccone a day before Pennsylvania's special election while at the same time criticizing Saccone's opponent as being allied with Nancy Pelosi.

"The Pittsburgh Post Gazette just endorsed Rick Saccone for Congress. He will be much better for steel and business. Very strong on experience and what our Country needs. Lamb will always vote for Pelosi and Dems....Will raise taxes, weak on Crime and Border," the president tweeted Monday morning.

Saccone has been viewed by [some in his party](#) as a lackluster candidate, and has struggled despite Trump winning the district by nearly 20 points during the 2016 election.

The Post-Gazette's editorial board on Sunday [endorsed](#) Saccone. The endorsement said the state representative "has a wealth of experience and an intimate knowledge of much of the district, because he has represented a part of it in the Legislature."

"He is a good fit for the district and would be an effective representative for it from his first day on the job," according to the endorsement.

Trump also expressed support for Saccone on Saturday during a rally in Pennsylvania. He urged rally attendees to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy" and said, "We need Republicans in office."

The president also blasted Lamb at the rally by saying that he is "trying to act like a Republican" but will not side with the GOP once in office.

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Democrats seek probe into whether Zinke violated Hatch Act [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/07/2018 01:24 PM EDT

Two senior House Natural Resources Democrats are [asking](#) the Office of the Special Counsel to investigate whether Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke violated the Hatch Act with an event close to

the boundaries of the upcoming special congressional election in Pennsylvania.

State Rep. Rick Saccone, the Republican candidate for the open House seat, attended the Feb. 24 event during which Zinke announced grants to help clean up abandoned mining sites nationwide, including \$56 million in the state. Zinke later appeared on "Fox News" for [an interview](#) during which host Neil Cavuto asked him about the special election.

Ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) questioned why the agency selected a site one mile from Pennsylvania's 18th district less than three weeks before the special election, currently considered a toss up. The Hatch Act generally bans government officials from using public resources to promote political campaigns. Grijalva and McEachin say Zinke's appearance in Pennsylvania raises several red flags given its proximity to the election.

"Only a full investigation can clarify whether Secretary Zinke violated the Hatch Act when traveling to the PA-18 boundaries to announce [abandoned mine lands] funding," they wrote. "We urge you to pursue it."

An Interior spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The request for an investigation comes one day after the Office of Special Counsel found White House counselor Kellyanne Conway [violated](#) the statute by advocating for one candidate during Alabama's special Senate race.

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Interior spent \$139K on Zinke office doors [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 03/08/2018 05:58 PM EDT

The Interior Department is spending \$139,000 for new doors for Secretary Ryan Zinke's office suite, according to [records](#) posted online.

The work was recommended by Interior career facilities and security officials, an agency spokeswoman said, not by Zinke.

"The secretary was not aware of this contract but agrees that this is a lot of money for demo, install, materials, and labor," Heather Swift, the spokeswoman, said in a statement.

The award to Maryland-based Conquest Solutions LLC was first reported by the [Associated Press](#). The work involves replacing three sets of double doors, including two that open onto a balcony and leak during rain storms, the AP reported. An existing set of doors to Zinke's office from a hallway do not have a lock, so the security will be upgraded with the new doors.

Swift said the work is part of a "decade-long modernization of the historic FDR-era building."

"Between regulations that require historic preservation and outdated government procurement rules, the costs for everything from pencils to printing to doors is astronomical. This is a perfect example of why the Secretary believes we need to reform procurement processes."

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson drew criticism recently over news that HUD would spend \$31,000 on a dining set. That order was subsequently canceled.

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Trump's Interior chief 'hopping around from campaign event to campaign event' [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 10/05/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO — raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels "give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business."

Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as "a little BS."

But some ethics advocates say Zinke's attendance at a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct, even if he crossed no legal red lines.

"It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen.

The secretary is already under investigation by his department's inspector general over his use of taxpayer-funded private planes for some of the trips, and the Office of Special Counsel is looking into an activist group's allegations that he violated the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activism by federal employees. The White House has cracked down on Cabinet members' travel habits following former HHS Secretary Tom Price's resignation on Friday, which occurred after POLITICO reported on his own expensive flights.

Zinke visited the Virgin Islands from March 30 to April 1 on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. On his first day, following a "veterans meet and greet" and a reception with Gov. Kenneth Mapp, he appeared in his personal capacity at a March fundraiser for the local Republican Party at the patio bar of the Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix, department records show.

Tickets for the fundraiser ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple to be an event "Patron," according to Zinke's official calendar and a copy of the invitation. Patrons and members of the host committee, who paid \$1,500 per couple, could get a photo with Zinke at the start of the event, which was attended by local party members and elected officials.

The following day, Zinke took a \$3,150 flight on a private plane, paid for by the department, from St. Croix to official functions on St. Thomas and returned later that evening. Interior Department officials said there was no other way to accommodate his schedule, which included official events on both islands commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Dutch government transferring control of the islands to the United States.

Zinke is allowed to engage in partisan political activity in a "purely personal (not official) capacity," so long as he does not use government resources, according to Interior Department guidelines on the Hatch Act and other federal laws. The invitation to the GOP fundraiser did not identify Zinke by his official title and included a disclaimer that the money is being solicited by the local party and "not by any federal official."

All told, Zinke has spent around \$20,000 for three charter flights as secretary, nowhere near the \$1 million tab Price racked up on non-commercial trips. But he has on numerous occasions attended political receptions, spoken to influential conservative groups or appeared alongside past campaign donors during trips he has taken outside of Washington, D.C., for official department business.

In one instance, Zinke gave a motivational speech for a professional hockey team owned by a major campaign contributor that he said was official business — and which required him to charter a \$12,000 flight to Montana for an appearance at the Western Governors Association the next day.

In another case, during a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Denver, he was introduced via a recorded voice as the Interior secretary and Zinke proceeded to talk about the agency's priorities. The summit was organized by the Centennial Institute, which bills itself as Colorado Christian University's think tank and is a part of the State Policy Network of organizations that collectively push for conservative state-level legislation.

An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor say whether he would keep raising political money. The agency also has yet to post Zinke's trip expenses involving any of the political events.

"The Interior Department under the Trump Administration has always and will always work to ensure all officials follow appropriate rules and regulations when traveling, including seeking commercial options at all times appropriate and feasible, to ensure the efficient use of government resources," spokeswoman Heather Swift said in a statement.

Swift did not respond to questions about whether the department had gotten reimbursement for the political portion of Zinke's three-day Virgin Islands trip, as the head of one watchdog group says it should have.

"Some of this travel is clearly political and that part of the travel should have been paid for by the RNC, NRCC, state political parties, a campaign committee or Zinke personally," said Daniel Stevens, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability.

No payments to the department are listed in the Virgin Islands Republican Party's FEC records.

Zinke is not the first Interior secretary, or Cabinet member, to have his activities questioned.

In 2012, a watchdog group called Cause of Action urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether President Barack Obama's then- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the Hatch Act while taking an Obama reelection campaign RV tour of Colorado with a couple of lawmakers and the state lieutenant governor. Local organizers of one stop on that tour had billed Salazar on its online events calendar as attending the political rally in his official role. OSC would not say whether its investigation uncovered any problems, but travel records Interior has posted show that one of Salazar's aides had told the tour's coordinator the schedule "should not refer to (Salazar as) 'secretary.'" Salazar did not respond to a request for comment.

A former Salazar aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Obama administration generally tried to avoid scheduling political events that coincided with official travel because it was difficult to divvy up what expenses should be reimbursed by a campaign.

The special counsel's office found Obama HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in violation of the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" by endorsing a candidate for North Carolina governor during a speech she made in her official capacity. Sebelius tried to scrub the violation by reclassifying the appearance as political and reimbursing the Treasury Department for costs associated with the trip.

Sally Jewell, who was Interior secretary during Obama's second term, said Zinke was within his rights to appear at the fundraiser in the Virgin Islands. Jewell said she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell while in Obama's Cabinet, though she paid her own way to Washington state and was not identified by her official title.

"If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side, I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said in an interview.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt canceled his scheduled appearance at a fundraiser for the Oklahoma Republican Party in April because an invitation had identified him by his official title and said he would discuss his work at the agency. EPA ethics officials said he would have been cleared to attend the event if not for that language on the invitation.

Watchdog groups say Zinke's behavior fits a pattern for Trump's Cabinet.

"These government resources have been abused by this administration," said Virginia Canter, an executive branch ethics counsel for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington who previously worked as an ethics official for Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Obama. "To the extent that some of that supports their political ambitions is inconsistent with the intent of this authority."

The Campaign for Accountability called on Interior's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act or department ethics rules with his speech to the hockey team, which the group said appeared to be a favor for a donor. Interior's IG office announced its investigation earlier this week, and OSC told the Campaign for Accountability that it was looking into the group's complaint, according to an email shared with POLITICO. The OSC declined to comment.

Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) have asked Interior's IG to also look into any trips on which the secretary was accompanied by his wife, Lola Zinke, who is chairing the campaign of Montana Republican Troy Downing, a candidate to unseat Democratic Sen. Jon Tester next year. Swift said Lola Zinke was not in the Virgin Islands and has paid her own way whenever she has traveled with her husband on official trips.

Many who know him see Zinke's travels as an attempt to keep in touch with political contacts as he contemplates what he will do after leaving the Trump administration. Back home, the 55-year-old former Montana congressman is seen as an attractive candidate for the open-seat governor's race in 2020, when Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock will have to step down because of term limits.

"I think he's definitely got political aspirations; that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a Montana-based sportsman group that supported Zinke's bid for Interior secretary. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

The Virgin Islands trip was Zinke's first interaction with big donors or influential conservative groups during his travel as Interior secretary.

A weeklong trip in May that took Zinke through Montana, Utah and California also offered a

chance to squeeze in some political events.

Zinke delivered the keynote speech at the RNC spring meeting on May 11 in Coronado, Calif. Zinke had flown to California the previous night, after several days touring monuments in Utah, and the RNC speech was his only event in the state aside from a meeting earlier that afternoon with Rep. Amata Radewagen, the Republican delegate from American Samoa, and members of the American Tunaboat Association.

The next day, Zinke flew back to Montana, where he joined Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and Vice President Mike Pence to tour a coal mine on the Crow Indian reservation operated by the Westmoreland Coal Co.

The trip offered Zinke and Pence an opportunity to tout the Trump administration's work to promote new coal mining on federal lands — and it allowed them to make a brief detour to promote Zinke's congressional replacement. That Friday night, Zinke, Pence and Daines attended a political rally for GOP candidate Greg Gianforte, and Zinke attended a get-out-the vote event for the Montana GOP the next day.

Zinke apparently paid for his return trip to Washington out of his own pocket — it was marked "personal travel" on his calendar, a designation not applied to the other flights on that trip.

Gianforte, whose wife is a major political donor in Montana, won the May 25 special election to take over Zinke's House seat.

Greg and Susan Gianforte donated more than \$10,000 to Zinke's 2016 congressional campaign and another \$10,000 to a joint Zinke-Daines PAC, according to federal records. The couple donated \$5,000 for his earlier run for Congress.

Zinke met with big influencers and donors in June as well.

On June 25, he flew from D.C. to Reno, Nev., where his only scheduled event was a meeting of the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a group of Republican attorneys general that has been linked to the Koch brothers, where he spoke and took questions for about 30 minutes, according to his schedule.

After his remarks, he sat at a dinner table with Montana's attorney general, the government relations specialist for the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Las Vegas Sands, and Koch Industries lobbyist Allen Richardson, Interior documents show.

The next day, Zinke flew to Las Vegas for an event on public lands in nearby Pahrump, Nev., and a speech that night to the National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights. Bill Foley, the team owner and chairman of Fidelity, introduced Zinke. Foley donated \$7,800 to Zinke's 2014 campaign, while employees and PACs associated with Fidelity and related companies gave another \$180,000. Interior officials said the speech to the NHL team was part of Zinke's official duties, and they pointed to scheduling conflicts it created to justify his use of a \$12,000 private plane to get to a Western Governors Association meeting in Montana the next day.

In July, Zinke spoke to several conservative groups in Colorado during a three-day trip that also included tours of Interior Department facilities in the state. He flew into Denver on July 20 so he could appear that evening at a closed-door reception for the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group of conservative state legislators, lobbyists and industry groups that has pushed for more state control over federal lands.

And over the next two days, he was a featured speaker at a Republican committee roundtable and attended the Western Conservative Summit in Denver.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

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Lawmakers want more information on alleged corruption at Puerto Rico utility [Back](#)

By Colin Wilhelm | 03/12/2018 05:56 PM EDT

Members of the House Natural Resources Committee, including Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah), are demanding more information from Puerto Rico's power utility as part of a congressional investigation into alleged corruption.

"Billions of taxpayer dollars are pledged to help Puerto Rico, but a lack of faith in Puerto Rico's institutions remains a major barrier to recovery," Bishop and two other Republicans [wrote](#) to the utility's interim executive director.

"A member of the committee has heard from constituents currently working to restore power in Puerto Rico under [agreements with other electric utilities], that utility crews are delayed or unable to complete electrification projects because of a lack of materials" from the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority.

The letter cites an incident in which FEMA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel raided a warehouse storing repair materials that PREPA did not acknowledge existed. Local media in Puerto Rico have also alleged that PREPA officials received bribes from local strip club owners to give them priority in power restoration, and ordered power restored to their own homes before other critical infrastructure, like San Juan's main hospital and airport.

The lawmakers, whose panel has jurisdiction over Puerto Rico and other territories, want more information from PREPA about any open investigations it has into alleged misappropriation of resources or bribery following Hurricane Maria, which struck the commonwealth last fall.

There have been multiple other reports of alleged corruption or mismanagement related to PREPA in the months following Maria's landfall. That includes a now-canceled \$300 million

federal-backed contract to a small Montana company that the utility authorized over objections from legal counsel.

PREPA has struggled to fully restore power in Puerto Rico nearly six months after the hurricane hit.

Since then Congress passed several aid packages, including \$2 billion in grants earmarked for repairing and improving Puerto Rico's electrical grid. The commonwealth government has wrestled with the Trump administration over nearly \$5 billion in additional loan funds it says it needs to help shore up the utility, which already struggled with service outages and \$9 billion in debt prior to the storm.

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FEMA commits to long-haul response in U.S. Virgin Islands [Back](#)

By Quint Forgey | 03/12/2018 02:06 PM EDT

A power outage abruptly ended a congressional field hearing today in the U.S. Virgin Islands as local officials complained of slow federal response to last year's hurricanes.

"We're certainly not in the dark on this issue," quipped Rep. [Blake Farenthold](#) (R-Texas), chairman of the House Oversight Subcommittee on Interior, Energy and the Environment.

The ironic electricity lapse highlights the U.S. territory's ongoing woes after Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged the islands late last summer, knocking out power to most of the region for several weeks. But a top Federal Emergency Management Agency official said the federal government will fully see the recovery through.

"We will be on the job until the territory tells us we've completed our work," said William Vogel, who serves as the agency's coordinator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Vogel said the agency has established 10 disaster recovery centers across the islands and made 92 local hires to better coordinate with area officials.

"The recovery is far from over," said Rep. [Stacey Plaskett](#), the U.S. Virgin Islands' delegate to Congress, noting that the territory's residents will "continue to demand massive amounts of aid."

U.S. Virgin Islands Senate President Myron Jackson complained that the burden of cleaning up mountains of trash fell immediately to residents and the local public works department following the storms, and that coordination between federal and local emergency officials was "very chaotic."

"We really need to revisit how FEMA and the territory protocols are put in place," he said.

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Senate GOP leaders won't try to block Trump's tariffs [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 03/12/2018 07:38 PM EDT

Republicans have been freaking out about President Donald Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs all month. But don't expect them to do anything about it just yet.

GOP leaders are shying away from a direct confrontation with Trump over trade, and signaled Monday that they won't try to pass legislation to override a president of their own party. They are instead hoping they can get the president to water down the tariffs as much as they can. Ultimately, they're loath to risk a brutal showdown, even over an issue that's provoked more GOP outrage toward Trump than any other one of his policies or controversies.

So even though several senators are introducing proposals to stop Trump's 25 percent tariff on imported steel and 10 percent tariff on imported aluminum, key Republicans are in no mood for a high-profile fight with Trump.

"That's clearly a long shot. But we're trying as best we can to persuade folks in the administration to scale this back to make it less harmful," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 GOP senator. "I don't think we can rely on Democrats. And moving something across the floor takes 60. And then you'd have to override a veto."

"It may be more of a back and forth between the executive branch and Congress rather than actual legislation," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). "We're making progress without legislation."

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) officially introduced his bill to nullify Trump's tariffs on Monday afternoon and Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) has proposed requiring congressional approval for trade actions. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has so far expressed no interest in taking Trump on via legislation, according to senators and aides. Asked for a comment, McConnell's office pointed to his earlier remarks expressing reservation about the tariffs.

Flake acknowledged that his leaders do not want to move forward with his bill but insisted that "there are a lot of members who want to vote this way." On Thursday, the Senate GOP spent its party lunch discussing if they have any recourse against Trump; on Sunday Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) said he would support Flake's bill but doubted it could pass.

Facing the steep veto override threshold that would require at least 16 Democrats in support,

Republicans are trying an easier road. Many of McConnell's members are hoping Trump simply grants enough exemptions to U.S. allies to make the new metal tariffs palatable, even though a large swath of GOP senators have said Trump's move will kill jobs and amount to a tax increase.

"I'm not a fan of the trade policy but I don't think we're there yet," said Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) of legislation to block Trump. "I think it may work itself out"

"I'm not really happy with what the president's done," said Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). "I'm hoping we can resolve this. And the president's been thinking it over too."

Hatch said last week he hoped Congress might overturn the tariffs. He said that was still on his mind, but added: "But I'm open to almost anything."

Republicans argue they have already made progress with Trump, who has granted exemptions to Canada and Mexico while talks on NAFTA continue. They are hoping he soon goes further and grants similar outs for countries like the United Kingdom and Australia. And while that happens, the Senate is likely to hold hearings on the impact of Trump's policies, Republicans said.

Hill Republicans reason that's far more effective than threatening Trump with legislative action and becoming engulfed in an intraparty war up and down Pennsylvania Avenue while the GOP defends its tenuous congressional majorities. Plus, taking Trump on might just might provoke him further.

"Senate Republicans overwhelmingly oppose these tariffs, but the question is how do we lessen the impact?" said a senior Republican aide. "A bill on the floor that would get a veto would only make things worse with a president who's never shied away from running against Congress."

That's not to say Republicans are happy with where they find themselves, almost unanimously panning Trump's proposals even as they doubt they can do anything about it.

"It would be better if Congress had more of a role," Thune said. "But we gave that away."

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Lightfoot's retirement prompts calls for permanent NASA leader [Back](#)

By Jacqueline Klimas | 03/12/2018 03:58 PM EDT

The acting head of NASA will retire at the end of April, sparking calls on Capitol Hill for the administration to find a permanent head for the nation's space exploration agency.

In a [memo](#) to staff today, Robert Lightfoot promised to work with the White House on a smooth transition to a new administrator and thanked employees for the "unbelievable ride."

He has been the acting head of NASA for all 14 months of Donald Trump's presidency, while the Senate has failed to confirm the administration's permanent choice to lead the agency, Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#) (R-Okla.).

Bridenstine, who was formally nominated in September, has been unable to win Democratic support because of his past remarks criticizing the LGBT community and denial of climate change.

"The White House needs to nominate a space professional for NASA administrator who will actually garner strong bipartisan support. The current nominee doesn't have the votes," Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) (D-Fla.) said in a statement on Lightfoot's retirement.

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Sent: Sun 9/3/2017 8:50:59 PM
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

This is what I'm planning to send:

The story is from EPA Office of Public Affairs and it makes clear the factual inaccuracies and editorial bias in the AP's story.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 3, 2017, at 4:50 PM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

Why is he more concerned with who wrote the press release than he is with the fact that a national reporter is publicizing inaccurate and misleading articles? Send him that.

From: Graham, Amy
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 4:39 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com>
Date: September 3, 2017 at 4:36:23 PM EDT
To: "Graham, Amy" <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

It's actually not, Amy. For one, it's unsigned except for the brief part at the end. Why does the EPA single out one reporter when the story was double-bylined? Is it normal practice for US government agencies to target specific reporters with unrelated personal criticism in response to stories? Who at EPA wrote the statement? Were Michael Abboud, James Hewitt, or other former RNC staffers involved in drafting the statement? Again, it would be easier to discuss this by phone. I'm at 571-255-9442. Mr. Abboud declined to say whether he or Mr. Hewitt were involved in drafting the statement.

Matthew Nussbaum

POLITICO White House Reporter

Mnussbaum@politico.com

C: (571)-255-9442

@MatthewNussbaum

From: Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>

Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 4:33:39 PM

To: Matthew Nussbaum

Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

The press release is pretty self explanatory. What are your specific questions? I'm not in a place to chat right this second.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 3, 2017, at 4:26 PM, Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com> wrote:

Thanks, I actually just spoke with Michael Abboud who recommended I get in touch with you. Please give me a call when you get a chance: 571-255-9442.

Trying to get some additional information about this statement: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-response-aps-misleading-story>

EPA Response To The AP's Misleading Story US EPA
--

www.epa.gov

EPA News Release: EPA Response To The AP's Misleading Story

Matthew Nussbaum

POLITICO White House Reporter

Mnussbaum@politico.com

C: (571)-255-9442

@MatthewNussbaum

From: Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>

Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 4:24:17 PM

To: Matthew Nussbaum

Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

Matthew- Has anyone gotten back to you yet? What's your specific request?

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 3, 2017, at 4:09 PM, Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com> wrote:

Hi,

Can someone please give me call at their earliest convenience: 571-255-9442.

Thanks so much.

Matt

Matthew Nussbaum

POLITICO White House Reporter

Mnussbaum@politico.com

C: (571)-255-9442

@MatthewNussbaum

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 5:07:45 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Starbucks: SCOTUS strikes down practice of refusing offensive patents -- Spending tops 50 million in GA-06 as TRUMP promotes HANDEL -- DEMS to halt Senate business over health care bill -- SAM STEIN to Daily Beast

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Starbucks

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Monday afternoon. THE PRESIDENT is hosting Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela. Here's an exchange, per the pooler George Condon of National Journal: "We have many things to discuss. We're going to spend quite a bit of time today," said the president. 'The Panama Canal is doing quite well.' Then, looking toward his visitor who was seated in the chair to his right, the president added, 'I think we did a good job building it, right?' President Varela responded, 'Very good job.'"

BIG NEWS FROM THE SUPREME COURT -- "Supreme Court rules the government can't refuse to register trademarks considered offensive," by Josh Gerstein: "The Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional the federal government's practice of refusing to register trademarks that officials deem to be offensive on racial, religious or similar grounds. The justices ruled, 8-0, in favor of Simon Tam, the front man for an all-Asian-American rock band known as 'The Slants.' The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office had refused to register the band's name, citing a law that denied trademarks that disparage individuals, institutions, beliefs or national symbols. ... The eight justices who considered the case held unanimously that the clause banning registration of disparaging trademarks violates the First Amendment." <http://politi.co/2sKKNtE> ... **A great Planet Money episode on the band** <http://n.pr/2tjVZdD> ... **The band's song protesting the trademark office** <http://bit.ly/2tk5TVQ>

-- **THE LOCAL ANGLE:** This decision will thrill the owner of a certain Washington football team. Dan Snyder, the owner of the Washington Redskins, has been battling the trademark office for years, and some of the team's trademarks were cancelled in 2014. The team filed a friend of the court brief supporting the band when the case was heard. <http://bit.ly/2sKOO0S>

-- **@NoraPrinciotti:** "#Redskins owner Dan Snyder says 'I am THRILLED! Hail to the Redskins.' in response to #SCOTUS ruling."

ON THE DOCKET -- "Supreme Court to hear partisan gerrymandering case," by Josh Gerstein: "The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case from Wisconsin that

could clarify whether redistricting plans can be unconstitutional because they're too partisan. Last November, a three-judge panel ruled, 2-1, that the Republican-drawn maps for Wisconsin's state assembly were impermissibly biased against Democrats. The high court also signaled Monday that it may well split along partisan lines. The justices voted, 5-4, to stay a requirement that the state file a new redistricting plan by Nov. 1. All the Democratic appointees dissented." <http://politi.co/2sKS6S3>

-- **"Supreme Court throws out bulk of suit by post-9/11 detainees,"** by Josh <http://politi.co/2sL1wwG>

THE COOLING SAUCER -- "Democrats to halt Senate business over Obamacare repeal," by Jennifer Haberkorn: "Beginning Monday night, Democrats will start objecting to all unanimous consent requests in the Senate, according to a Democratic aide. They plan to control the floor of the chamber Monday night and try to force the House-passed health care bill to committee in a bid to further delay it. Without the votes to block Obamacare repeal, Democrats are turning to procedural moves they believe will underscore their most powerful argument: Republicans are hiding their repeal plan from the public and using Senate procedures to keep it a secret. ...

"Holding the floor on Monday evening won't change the timing of a health care vote. And Democrats are unlikely to be able to force the House bill to committee or delay it. But it will force Republicans to answer for what Democrats say is a rushed process and bad policy. Democrats also plan to make a series of parliamentary inquiries to highlight the difference between the passage of the Affordable Care Act and the GOP bill. ... Democrats may still allow some honorary, bipartisan resolutions." <http://politi.co/2tkhF9v>

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Intuitive leadership, teamwork and a dedication to service -just a few of the valuable qualities veterans possess that inspired Starbuck to hire 10,000 veterans and military spouses by 2018. We reached our initial goal 18 months early and have proudly increased our commitment to 25,000 hires by 2025 <http://sbux.co/2stiS17> *****

IN SYRIA -- "Russia warns US after downing of Syrian jet," by the AP: "Russia's defense ministry says it will treat U.S.-led coalition planes in Syria, west of the Euphrates River, as targets after the U.S. military shot down a Syrian Air Force jet on Sunday. Moscow has condemned the U.S. downing of the Syrian government fighter jet after it dropped bombs nears U.S. partner forces." <http://apne.ws/2sK7fTq>

TRUMP WADES INTO GEORGIA -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:27 a.m.: "The Dems want to stop tax cuts, good healthcare and Border Security. Their ObamaCare is dead with 100% increases in P's. Vote now for Karen H"

-- **REPUBLICANS** are really all in here. Speaker Paul Ryan has gone, McCarthy stopped by and outside groups and the NRCC are in big. ... **@LA_Hagen:** "House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy stopped by Karen Handel's first event of the day #GA06" <http://bit.ly/2sK3DB2>

NEW THRESHOLD -- "Spending in Georgia Sixth race pushes past \$50 million," by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Greg Bluestein: "The race for Georgia's 6th District was already the most expensive election of its kind. Now the contest to represent a suburban Atlanta district has shattered another barrier, topping \$50 million in overall spending. An election-eve analysis by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution shows that roughly \$42 million has been spent or reserved for TV and radio ads in the race ... That doesn't include the other cash spent by the campaigns and the super PACs and outside groups supporting them for other trappings of the campaigns, including direct-mail, staff payroll, consulting fees and digital ads." <http://on-ajc.com/2tkbGRV>

FOR SCALISE -- CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP PATRICK MCHENRY (R-N.C.) has organized two blood drives on the Hill this week in honor of House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) and the other victims of last week's shootings. The blood drive tomorrow will be at the Rayburn Foyer from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is supported by INOVA Blood Donor Services and the blood drive on Thursday, which is supported by the American Red Cross, will be at the Rayburn Foyer and Rayburn 2050 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

OOPS -- "GOP Data Firm Accidentally Leaks Personal Details of Nearly 200 Million American Voters," by Gizmodo's Dell Cameron and Kate Conger: "Political data gathered on more than 198 million US citizens was exposed this month after a marketing firm contracted by the [RNC] stored internal documents on a publicly accessible Amazon server. The data leak contains a wealth of personal information on roughly 61 percent of the US population. Along with home addresses, birthdates, and phone numbers, the records include advanced sentiment analyses used by political groups to predict where individual voters fall on hot-button issues such as gun ownership, stem cell research, and the right to abortion, as well as suspected religious affiliation and ethnicity." <http://bit.ly/2tjSGDj>

JOSH ROGIN in WaPo, "The State Department just broke a promise to minority and female recruits": "Dozens of young minority and female State Department recruits received startling and unwelcome news last week: They would not be able to soon join the Foreign Service despite having been promised that opportunity. Their saga is just the latest sign that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's rush to slash the size of the State Department without a plan is harming diplomacy and having negative unintended effects. The recruits, who are part of the State Department's Rangel and Pickering fellowship programs, have already completed two years of graduate-level education at U.S. taxpayers' expense plus an internship, often in a foreign country. ... Many were shocked when they received a letter telling them they had one week to decide if they wanted to take a much less appealing job - stamping passports in a foreign embassy for two years - with the prospect but no guarantee of becoming a Foreign Service officer even after that." <http://wapo.st/2rMlgel>

THE RESISTANCE -- "Cecile Richards on Planned Parenthood, the Resistance, and Galvanizing the Next Generation of Activists," by Jonathan Van Meter in Vogue: "The day after Donald Trump's election, the collective panic and despair on the left

translated into a tidal wave of donations that went overwhelmingly to two nonprofits: Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union. Both were founded a century ago, and they have been working closely together ever since. (When Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger was arrested in 1916 for handing out pamphlets on how women could avoid pregnancy, it was ACLU founder Roger Baldwin who came to her defense.)

"It was as if a huge swath of progressive America -more than 600,000 new donors to Planned Parenthood and 1.6 million to the ACLU-intuited that these organizations were now the twin pillars of a newly emboldened progressive movement, and their leaders, Anthony Romero, the ACLU's executive director, and Richards, were the faces of the resistance. It was a perfect pairing-the two are close friends, staunch allies, and battle-tested generals of their respective armies. 'Cecile and I understand each other,' says Romero. 'We have the same value system. When I'm having a hard day, I call her and say, 'You need to help me dust myself off.' She is always empathetic, but always the first one to push you back out there.'" <http://bit.ly/2sKoBj6>

NEW PETS -- @SecondLady: "We welcomed a new kitten to our family during our trip back home to Indiana this weekend!!Introducing: Hazel!" <http://bit.ly/2tk3ZvI>
...**@VPPressSec:** "New Second Dog - Harley - got his first ride on Air Force Two with @VP. Next exploring the grounds & house at Vice President's Residence."
<http://bit.ly/2tk1d97>

QUOTE OF THE DAY -- "I have people knocking down my door to talk to the presidential personnel office. ... There is a huge demand to join this administration," Sean Spicer to WaPo's Lisa Rein and Abby Phillip. <http://wapo.st/2sKR48J>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Orange County Republicans prepare for a fight -- Lawmakers leaves Albany without any deals <http://politi.co/2tkiBe5>

MEDIAWATCH -- EYE-POPPING VALUATION -- "Vice raises \$450 million from TPG," by CNBC's Michelle Castillo: "Vice has raised a new \$450 million round of funding from TPG, Vice Media CEO Shane Smith told CNBC. With the minority investment from TPG, the company is now valued at \$5.7 billion." <http://cnb.cx/2tkqjVJ>

-- **@mcalderrone:** "News I hate to report: @samsteinhp joining the Daily Beast." ...
@DylanByers: "Media Move: The @JoePompeo, author of Politico's Morning Media newsletter, is joining Vanity Fair's @VFHIVE as senior media correspondent."

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- The Reagan Years, a film co-directed by Sierra Pettengill and Pacho Velez, will open in theaters on June 26. The film is entirely archival footage that has largely been unseen. It will air on CNN in September. *Trailer*
<http://bit.ly/2sJZ9KN>

OUT AND ABOUT -- Over the weekend, more than 600 Mississippians gathered at the Henry Bacon Ballfield for the Mississippi Society's annual Mississippi on the Mall event.

SPOTTED: Rep. Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.) and son Bear, Brad White, Michelle Barlow Richardson; University of Southern Mississippi's President Rodney Bennett and Vice-President Gordon Cannon, Nick Owens; Susan Sweat, Robert Murray (with baby boy Brooks), Sarah Lloyd Stevenson, Nicole Tisdale, Brett Richards, Samantha Helton, Mary Margaret Johnson, Frances Stringer and many Capitol Hill staffers and alumni tailgating with Lincoln.

***** **A message from Starbucks:** Veterans and military spouses strengthen communities through leadership, service and citizenship. Starbucks is [hiring](#) 25,000 veterans and military spouses by 2025, opening 100 additional Military Family Stores in the next five years and expanding our partnerships to create successful transitions for service members and spouses. Learn more: <http://sbux.co/2stiS17> *****

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To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
Cc: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Thur 7/20/2017 2:11:57 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17

Good, please send.

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2017 8:33 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>
Cc: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17

EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17

WNYT: EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday. The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

Washington Examiner: Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration. Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The Hill: GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others. The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving. Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Washington Post: John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate. The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

Wall Street Journal: Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week. The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

Washington Examiner: Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus. "We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic." Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act.

New York Times: Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision “very unfair to the president.” In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions’s decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. “Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else,” Mr. Trump said.

The Associated Press: Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election. Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday. Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

WNYT

<http://wnyt.com/news/epa-environmental-protection-agency-saratoga-springs-concerns/4547247/>

EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

By WNYT Staff, 7/19/17 11:12 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday.

The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

"55 years, even five years is unacceptable. We've been fighting to clean up the river for 50 years," said Jamison.

Since General Electric finished up dredging the Hudson River in 2015, the EPA has been working on analyzing the cleanup. The public hearing at the Hilton comes at the EPA's conclusion of a 1,000 page five-year report on the cleanup.

The EPA says General Electric dumped its first load of PCBs into the river from its two plants in Washington County in 1947.

GE removed 310,000 pounds of PCBs from the river. It was twice what the EPA expected to find. That is one of the reasons the environmental group Riverkeeper says the EPA needs to change the cleanup plan accordingly.

"First, the levels of PCBs in the surface sediments are much higher than EPA expected. Second of all, the PCB levels in fish are much higher than EPA expected. What that means is even if the decay rates that EPA predicts occur the cleanup will still be decades late on its target," said Richard Webster, Riverkeeper Legal Program Director.

The state DEC, along with more than 40 state lawmakers also disagree with the EPA's approach.

"They are saying 50 years, their sister agencies using the same data doing a different analysis, are saying it's over a century until people can eat fish out of the river more than once a week, it's not acceptable," said Assem. Carrie Woerner, D-Round Lake.

The EPA says more dredging wouldn't significantly speed up the timeline before Hudson River fish are edible again.

There could be a third public hearing. The first was held in Poughkeepsie. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are demanding one at the end of the pollution's path, in New York City. The public comment period lasts until September 1.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-expected-to-drop-harley-davidsons-3-million-fine-for-epa-violations/article/2629160>

Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

By John Siciliano, 7/19/17 6:21 PM

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration.

Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The company had agreed to pay a \$12 million fine, in addition to the \$3 million, to settle Environmental Protection Agency claims that 340,000 of its motorcycles emitted pollution at rates that exceeded federal standards.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/overnights/342815-overnight-energy-gop-takes-on-endangered-species-reform>

GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

By Timothy Cama and Devin Henry, 7/19/17 6:06 PM

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others.

The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving.

Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Democrats, meanwhile, see the proposals as significant threats to a bedrock environmental law and a handout to industries, including oil and natural gas.

The House Natural Resources Committee discussed five bills whose effects would include allowing the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to use economic costs to deny listing a species as endangered or threatened, require the agency to prioritize input in listing decisions from states, remove the gray wolf from the endangered list and limit payouts of attorneys' fees in Endangered Species Act (ESA) litigation.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, meanwhile, debated legislation meant to boost hunting and fishing that has a provision attached to undo the gray wolf listing.

The Obama administration tried to delist the gray wolf, but a federal court reversed the decision. Provisions in both the House and the Senate would instruct the FWS to reinstate the delisting and declare that it is not subject to review by the courts.

"In short, the ESA doesn't work," said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah). "We have to find a way to reform it so that it actually solves problems, not just continues on the process. Hopefully, working with our colleagues in the Senate and the administration, we can lay a foundation for ESA reform that will do us well."

Rep. Raúl Grijalva (Ariz.), the top Democrat on the panel, shot back.

"The Endangered Species Act works," he said.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/john-mccain-republican-senator-from-arizona-has-a-brain-tumor/2017/07/19/3331c5fa-6cdf-11e7-b9e2-2056e768a7e5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_mccain-845pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.70b0d6ddd8a1

John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

By Sean Sullivan, Karoun Demirjian, and Paul Kane 7/19/17

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate.

The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

McCain, 80, has been away from the Senate this week, recovering from the surgery and undergoing tests. His office issued a statement describing him "in good spirits" and noting that his doctors say his underlying health is excellent — but not indicating when he will return to the Senate.

Glioblastoma is an aggressive type of brain cancer, and the prognosis for this kind of cancer is generally poor. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) survived less than 15 months after his was

found in 2008. McCain's doctors said the "tissue of concern" was removed during the blood-clot procedure.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/gop-senators-lunch-with-trump-over-health-bills-troubles-1500483205>

Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

By Louise Radnofsky, Kristina Peterson, and Stephanie Armour, 7/19/17 10:26 PM

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week.

The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

"Any senator who votes against starting debate is really telling America that you're fine with Obamacare," Mr. Trump said before a lunch with the senators Wednesday. He gestured at one wavering GOP lawmaker, Dean Heller of Nevada, saying, "He wants to remain a senator, doesn't he?" and warned lawmakers not to leave town in August without a deal.

Senate Republican leaders conceded defeat earlier this week on their effort to roll back and replace the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare, but at Mr. Trump's urging, they dug in Wednesday for what is expected to be the final push. Senate Republicans said they were hoping to rustle up 50 votes for a third version of the bill.

Mr. Trump, telling the senators they were "very close" to a deal, signaled the White House would take a more aggressive role in wrangling the 50 votes need to pass the bill. The GOP

president suggested that Republicans had it easy in voting for the 2010 law's repeal when his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, was in office because they knew he would veto it and there would be no consequences.

"I'm ready to act, I have pen in hand, believe me, I'm sitting in that office. You've never had that before," Mr. Trump said. "For seven years, you've had an easy rap: 'We'll repeal, we'll replace, and he's never going to sign it.' "

GOP leaders' immediate challenge is mustering 50 Republican lawmakers to approve a procedural motion that would allow debate to begin on their health-care bill.

Adding to the uncertainty, Sen. John McCain's office disclosed late Wednesday that the Arizona Republican has been diagnosed with a type of brain tumor known as a glioblastoma, and that the timing of his return to the Senate would depend on consultations with his medical team.

GOP senators said Wednesday night that the indefinite absence of Mr. McCain made their quest to get 50 votes on the health-care bill harder. "That does complicate things," said Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.).

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said after the White House lunch that a vote on that motion would happen next week, regardless of whether it was expected to pass, and that he had "every expectation" of trying to eke out a bill with majority support after that.

"I want to disabuse any of you of the notion that we will not have that vote next week," Mr. McConnell said.

GOP leaders hope that once debate begins and senators offer a variety of amendments, a majority will emerge for some version. Earlier this week, three Republicans—Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia—said they would oppose the motion to proceed on a repeal-only bill. Unless one of them changes her mind, debate can't begin because Democrats are uniformly opposed.

Among the amendments may be one to largely repeal the 2010 law without an immediate replacement. An estimate released Wednesday by the Congressional Budget Office found that such a move would leave 32 million more people uninsured and would double premiums by 2026, compared with current law. The measure would reduce federal deficits by \$473 billion over the coming decade, the CBO estimated.

About 20 GOP senators huddled for more than two hours Wednesday night, but it wasn't clear if they had gotten any closer to securing the needed 50 votes. "Hard to say," Mr. Toomey said upon leaving the meeting.

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus came to the meeting but was asked to stay in a room separate from the one where senators held their discussion because some lawmakers wanted to speak privately, an aide said.

"We're at our best when we're among ourselves," said Sen. John Kennedy (R., La.)

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R., Alaska), an opponent of the repeal-only plan, was noncommittal on her stance after the meeting. Ms. Capito, also an opponent of that approach, declined to comment on the meeting.

The GOP currently holds 52 seats in the Senate, leaving it vulnerable to defections from conservatives, centrists or any senator with a home-state concern. Democrats have remained unified in their desire to preserve Mr. Obama's signature domestic policy achievement.

GOP leaders are faced in the days ahead with finding ways to lure back at least some of the GOP senators who have said in recent days they couldn't support the latest version of a bill aimed at overhauling the nation's health-care system.

Ms. Capito, for example, is among those who have protested the bill's cuts to Medicaid, the federal-state health program for the poor. The administration is pushing the notion of waivers for

states to redesign their Medicaid programs, including more support for low-income people. Sen. Roy Blunt (R., Mo.) said Wednesday senators had discussed the idea at lunch.

Ms. Murkowski has similar concerns as well as a broader worry about her state's fragile insurance market. Mr. Trump cited the current struggles of Alaska's insurance markets as a reason for her to take action.

Another holdout, Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah), spoke with the president Tuesday, and Mr. Trump appeared open to the changes the senator wants, a spokesman for Mr. Lee said. A White House aide said the administration is open to any provision that increases GOP support for the bill.

Mr. Lee has been especially concerned about alterations that were made to a provision of the GOP bill written by Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), which was designed to lower premiums by allowing insurers to sell cheaper, less-comprehensive plans than allowed under current law.

Similarly, GOP leaders have said they could address some of the concerns of Sen. Jerry Moran (R., Kan.) that the bill could negatively affect his state.

Before this week, the president had been less active in the negotiations in the Senate than he was in helping pass health-care legislation in the House.

The question is whether his late intervention can turn the tide. Some Republicans have been quietly skeptical of the president's arm's-length approach to Senate negotiations, though others have said he has been smart to hold back.

"Do the tectonic plates break and begin to move?" said Sen. Bill Cassidy (R., La.), after the meeting. "I can tell you they weren't before that meeting. The fact that the president comes in and very much emphasizes the need for momentum can break those plates."

"We are getting close -- the issues are narrowing," added Sen. Ron Johnson (R., Wis.), a

conservative senator who has said his support for a GOP bill isn't guaranteed.

"There is still a hope on behalf of the administration and a lot of senators too that we can get there," said Sen. John Thune (R., S.D.), a member of the chamber's leadership. "We're going to take one more shot at it."

For months, lobbyists, GOP strategists and White House officials have described the GOP health bill in vivid metaphors, ranging from the biblical resurrection of Lazarus to the bathtub scene in "Fatal Attraction," where an apparently vanquished villain roars back to life.

Heading into this week, a senior White House official predicted, "This bill will have been declared dead once, and resurrected at least once." Officials also regularly cite the House's success in passing a health bill after legislation was initially pulled from the floor in March.

Democrats, for their part, are seeking to use Mr. Trump's revival of the GOP push to draw fresh fuel for their campaigns.

"Like the armored and mummified White Walkers from Game of Thrones, Trumpcare is hard to kill," Sen. Jeff Merkley (D., Ore.) wrote Wednesday in a fundraising email. "Republicans continue reanimating their terrible bill to kick millions of Americans off of their health care... Chip in now and support my efforts to kill this bill once and for all!"

Democrats also hammered senators such as Mr. Heller of Nevada and Jeff Flake of Arizona, who are facing re-election campaigns in 2018, over the prospect of Medicaid cuts.

Among those warning of dire consequences if Republican senators don't repeal Obamacare is Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel. She wrote in an email to GOP donors and supporters Wednesday that "we could lose the midterm elections" because "some in the Senate are refusing to even put a simple repeal bill on [Mr. Trump's] desk."

Conservative groups also joined in, including the Senate Conservatives Fund, a political-action committee, whose head Ken Cuccinelli said Wednesday the group would hold Senate Republicans accountable if they failed to pass health-care legislation.

In the Washington swamp decried by Mr. Trump, Mr. Cuccinelli said, “Mitch McConnell is the head alligator.”

Such threats may have limited effect on some of the Republican dissenters. Ms. Collins and Ms. Capito don’t face re-election until 2020, and Ms. Murkowski isn’t up until 2022. Still, conservative activists said they hope to send a broader message to Republicans about the importance of sticking to their promises.

“It’s not just about these senators; it’s about the state of the Republican party,” said Rachael Slobodien, spokeswoman for the conservative Club for Growth. “This is a much bigger fight.”

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/senate-holdouts-optimistic-after-late-meetings-to-revive-obamacare-replacement-bill/article/2629188>

Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

By Robert King and Susan Ferrechio

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus.

"We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic."

Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate

on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act. Lee wants language to ensure lower premiums by allowing health insurers to offer plans outside of the Obamacare mandates and in a separate pool from high-risk consumers.

Another "no" on the motion to proceed, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she remains undecided but hopeful.

"I am encouraged by the level of discussion that we had," Murkowski said.

Republican leaders are looking for ways to lure in moderates like Murkowski and Shelly Moore Capito, of West Virginia, who fear BCRA's reduction in Medicaid growth will hurt their states. They are offering additional Medicaid funding for Alaska, West Virginia and other Medicaid-dependent states, but the offer has not flipped any "no" votes yet.

The meeting, involving more than a dozen GOP lawmakers, was interrupted by the news that Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was diagnosed with a brain cancer.

"We prayed," Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., told reporters. "It was very emotional, almost kind of stunned disbelief for a minute." Hoeven said the group asked Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., a former minister, "to lead us in prayer."

McCain's health status further muddles the fate of the bill, because it takes away, at least for now, one of the 52 Senate GOP votes in play. Republicans need at least 50 to advance the bill, and Vice President Mike Pence would break the tie in the event of a 50-50 vote.

McCain has not indicated when he might return to the Senate and is faced with the possibility of chemotherapy and radiation to treat his cancer.

"Obviously, I think more people are worried about his health than thinking about the math," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn. "But you understand the math. Obviously it makes things difficult."

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is promising a vote early next week on proceeding to a bill, but it could be one of two options.

Republican leaders want the BCRA to advance, but they are threatening Republicans with a 2015 alternative bill that repeals most of Obamacare without a replacement. All but one Republican voted for it in 2015, in part because it faced a certain veto from former President Barack Obama and would never be enacted.

Many GOP lawmakers would oppose a straight repeal vote now because it could well become law. But they are eager to avoid a contradictory and politically perilous vote on the measure.

Murkowski said she would oppose proceeding on a bill to repeal Obamacare without a replacement, but suggested the GOP leadership has not signaled which measure would be taken up next week.

"We don't have a clear determination as to what it is we are voting for," Murkowski said.

Wednesday night's meeting marked a kind of reset for the healthcare debate in the Senate, which essentially imploded earlier in the week when several senators, including Lee, announced their opposition, killing an effort to bring the BCRA to the floor.

Following a White House meeting Wednesday with President Trump, the holdouts are back at the table, and leadership is eager to make a deal.

Hoeven said "everyone is throwing out ideas, which is good from the standpoint that people are really hashing through some things so hopefully we are making some progress."

The New York Times

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/us/politics/trump-interview-sessions-russia.html?_r=0

Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

By Peter Baker, Michael Schmidt, and Maggie Haberman, 7/19/17

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision “very unfair to the president.”

In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions’s decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. “Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else,” Mr. Trump said.

In a wide-ranging interview with The New York Times, the president also accused James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he fired in May, of trying to leverage a dossier of compromising material to keep his job. Mr. Trump criticized both the acting F.B.I. director who has been filling in since Mr. Comey’s dismissal and the deputy attorney general who recommended it. And he took on Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel now leading the investigation into Russian meddling in last year’s election.

Mr. Trump said Mr. Mueller was running an office rife with conflicts of interest and warned investigators against delving into matters too far afield from Russia. Mr. Trump never said he would order the Justice Department to fire Mr. Mueller, nor would he outline circumstances under which he might do so. But he left open the possibility as he expressed deep grievance over an investigation that has taken a political toll in the six months since he took office.

Asked if Mr. Mueller’s investigation would cross a red line if it expanded to look at his family’s finances beyond any relationship to Russia, Mr. Trump said, “I would say yes.” He would not say what he would do about it. “I think that’s a violation. Look, this is about Russia.”

While the interview touched on an array of issues, including health care, foreign affairs and politics, the investigation dominated the conversation. He said that as far as he knew, he was not under investigation himself, despite reports that Mr. Mueller is looking at whether the president obstructed justice by firing Mr. Comey.

“I don’t think we’re under investigation,” he said. “I’m not under investigation. For what? I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Describing a newly disclosed informal conversation he had with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia during a dinner of world leaders in Germany this month, Mr. Trump said they talked for about 15 minutes, mostly about “pleasantries.” But Mr. Trump did say that they talked “about adoption.” Mr. Putin banned American adoptions of Russian children in 2012 after the United States enacted sanctions on Russians accused of human rights abuses, an issue that remains a sore point in relations with Moscow.

Mr. Trump acknowledged that it was “interesting” that adoptions came up since his son, Donald Trump Jr., said that was the topic of a meeting he had with several Russians with ties to the Kremlin during last year’s campaign. Even though emails show that the session had been set up to pass along incriminating information about Hillary Clinton, the president said he did not need such material from Russia about Mrs. Clinton last year because he already had more than enough.

The interview came as the White House was trying to regain momentum after the collapse of health care legislation even while the president’s son, son-in-law and former campaign chairman were being asked to talk with Senate investigators. Relaxed and engaged, the president sat at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, with only one aide, Hope Hicks, sitting in on the interview. The session was sandwiched between a White House lunch with Republican senators and an event promoting “Made in America” week.

Over the course of 50 minutes, the often-fiery Mr. Trump demonstrated his more amiable side, joking about holding hands with the president of France and musing about having a military parade down a main avenue in Washington. He took satisfaction that unemployment has fallen and stock markets have risen to record highs on his watch.

At one point, his daughter Ivanka arrived at the doorway with her daughter, Arabella, who ran to her grandfather and gave him a kiss. He greeted the 6-year-old girl as “baby,” then urged her to show the reporters her ability to speak Chinese. She obliged.

But Mr. Trump left little doubt during the interview that the Russia investigation remained a sore point. His pique at Mr. Sessions, in particular, seemed fresh even months after the attorney general’s recusal. Mr. Sessions was the first senator to endorse Mr. Trump’s candidacy and was rewarded with a key cabinet slot, but has been more distant from the president lately.

“Jeff Sessions takes the job, gets into the job, recuses himself, which frankly I think is very unfair to the president,” he added. “How do you take a job and then recuse yourself? If he would have recused himself before the job, I would have said, ‘Thanks, Jeff, but I’m not going to take you.’ It’s extremely unfair — and that’s a mild word — to the president.”

Mr. Trump also faulted Mr. Sessions for his testimony during Senate confirmation hearings when Mr. Sessions said he had not had “communications with the Russians” even though he had met at least twice with Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak. “Jeff Sessions gave some bad answers,” the president said. “He gave some answers that were simple questions and should have been simple answers, but they weren’t.”

A spokesman for Mr. Sessions declined to comment on Wednesday.

The president added a new allegation against Mr. Comey, whose dismissal has become a central issue for critics who said it amounted to an attempt to obstruct the investigation into Russian meddling in the election and any possible collusion with Mr. Trump’s team.

Mr. Trump recalled that a little more than two weeks before his inauguration, Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials briefed him at Trump Tower on Russian meddling. Mr. Comey afterward pulled Mr. Trump aside and told him about a dossier that had been assembled by a former British spy filled with salacious allegations against the incoming president, including supposed sexual escapades in Moscow. The F.B.I. has not corroborated the most sensational assertions in the dossier.

In the interview, Mr. Trump said he believed Mr. Comey told him about the dossier to implicitly make clear he had something to hold over the president. “In my opinion, he shared it so that I would think he had it out there,” Mr. Trump said. As leverage? “Yeah, I think so,” Mr. Trump said. “In retrospect.”

The president dismissed the assertions in the dossier: “When he brought it to me, I said this is really made-up junk. I didn’t think about any of it. I just thought about, man, this is such a phony deal.”

Mr. Comey declined to comment on Wednesday.

But Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials decided it was best for him to raise the subject with Mr. Trump alone because he was going to remain as F.B.I. director. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that he disclosed the details of the dossier to Mr. Trump because he thought that the news media would soon be publishing details from it and that Mr. Trump had a right to know what information was out there about him. A two-page summary about the dossier was widely reported the week before Mr. Trump’s inauguration, including by The Times.

Mr. Trump rebutted Mr. Comey’s claim that in a one-on-one meeting in the Oval Office on Feb. 14, the president asked him to end the investigation into his former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that Mr. Trump kicked the vice president, attorney general and several other senior administration officials out of the room before having the discussion with Mr. Comey.

“I don’t remember even talking to him about any of this stuff,” Mr. Trump said. “He said I asked people to go. Look, you look at his testimony. His testimony is loaded up with lies, O.K.?”

He expressed no second thoughts about firing Mr. Comey, saying, “I did a great thing for the American people.”

Mr. Trump was also critical of Mr. Mueller, a former F.B.I. director, reprising some of his past complaints that lawyers in his office contributed money to Mrs. Clinton's campaign. He noted that he actually interviewed Mr. Mueller to replace Mr. Comey just before his appointment as special counsel.

"He was up here and he wanted the job," Mr. Trump said. After he was named special counsel, "I said, 'What the hell is this all about?' Talk about conflicts. But he was interviewing for the job. There were many other conflicts that I haven't said, but I will at some point."

The president also expressed discontent with Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, a former federal prosecutor from Baltimore. When Mr. Sessions recused himself, the president said he was irritated to learn where his deputy was from. "There are very few Republicans in Baltimore, if any," he said of the predominantly Democratic city.

He complained that Mr. Rosenstein had in effect been on both sides when it came to Mr. Comey. The deputy attorney general recommended Mr. Comey be fired but then appointed Mr. Mueller, who may be investigating whether the dismissal was an obstruction of justice. "Well, that's a conflict of interest," Mr. Trump said. "Do you know how many conflicts of interests there are?"

In an interview with Fox News before Mr. Trump's comments were published, Mr. Rosenstein said he was confident Mr. Mueller could avoid any conflict of interests. "We have a process with the department to take care of that," he said.

As for Andrew G. McCabe, the acting F.B.I. director, the president suggested that he, too, had a conflict. Mr. McCabe's wife, Jill McCabe, received nearly \$500,000 in 2015 during a losing campaign for the Virginia Senate from a political action committee affiliated with Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who is close friends with Hillary and Bill Clinton.

In his first description of his dinnertime conversation with Mr. Putin at the Group of 20 summit meeting in Hamburg, Germany, Mr. Trump played down its significance. He said his wife, Melania, was seated next to Mr. Putin at the other end of a table filled with world leaders.

“The meal was going toward dessert,” he said. “I went down just to say hello to Melania, and while I was there I said hello to Putin. Really, pleasantries more than anything else. It was not a long conversation, but it was, you know, could be 15 minutes. Just talked about things. Actually, it was very interesting, we talked about adoption.”

He noted the adoption issue came up in the June 2016 meeting between his son and Russian visitors. “I actually talked about Russian adoption with him,” he said, meaning Mr. Putin. “Which is interesting because it was a part of the conversation that Don had in that meeting.”

But the president repeated that he did not know about his son’s meeting at the time and added that he did not need the Russians to provide damaging information about Mrs. Clinton.

“There wasn’t much I could say about Hillary Clinton that was worse than what I was already saying,” he said. “Unless somebody said that she shot somebody in the back, there wasn’t much I could add to my repertoire.”

The Associated Press

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/3d281c11a96b4ad082fe88aa0db04305/Article_2017-07-19-US--Trump-Russia%20Probe/id-82fa9ba865cd468997cc6f7c6cbba709

Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 7/19/17, 7:05 PM

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election.

Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday.

Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

"As Mr. Kushner has been saying since March, he has been and is prepared to voluntarily cooperate and provide whatever information he has on the investigations to Congress," said attorney Abbe Lowell. "He will continue to cooperate and appreciates the opportunity to assist in putting this matter to rest."

That meeting will apparently take place behind closed doors.

Alan Futerfas, a lawyer for Trump Jr., did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment about his scheduled testimony. Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said Manafort received the request Wednesday afternoon and is reading it over.

The three men will almost certainly be asked about their attendance at a June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer. That gathering was arranged via emails that advertised it would reveal damaging information about Hillary Clinton.

The lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, also said Wednesday she was ready to testify before the U.S. Senate and "clarify the situation."

The meeting raised new questions about the Trump campaign's possible ties to Moscow, which are being scrutinized by federal and congressional investigators. These questions have only intensified as the identities of other Russia-connected participants have become known.

"I am ready to clarify the situation behind the mass hysteria, but only through lawyers or testifying in the Senate," Veselnitskaya said in an interview broadcast Wednesday on Kremlin-funded RT television.

"If the Senate wishes to hear the real story, I will be happy to speak up and share everything I

wanted to tell Mr. Trump," she added. That appeared to be a reference to Veselnitskaya's previous statement that the meeting with Trump Jr. focused on U.S.-Russian adoption policies and a U.S. sanctions law.

Veselnitskaya has denied working for the Russian government. She has not responded to repeated attempts by The Associated Press to reach her for comment.

Congressional investigators in both parties have said they want to hear from those involved in the meeting. The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, Virginia's Mark Warner, said Wednesday afternoon that the panel hasn't yet invited Veselnitskaya to testify, but he wants to hear from her and others who attended.

Warner said "it's still being worked out" whether some of his committee's more high-profile witnesses, including Trump Jr. and Manafort, should testify publicly or privately. The Senate and House intelligence panels conduct most of their interviews in private, but occasionally hold open hearings.

Warner said Trump Jr. has "no security clearances that I am aware of, so he should be able to testify in public."

The GOP chairman of Senate Judiciary panel, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, told Iowa reporters Wednesday that he's been talking to Trump Jr.'s lawyer and "didn't get any pushback" when suggesting he testify this week. But he said "it's kind of rushy" to call him in so quickly, and said Democrats had requested documents and emails that they wanted to see before a hearing.

Grassley had said he would subpoena the witnesses if necessary.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing will review a law that oversees the registration of foreign agents. The panel has been investigating one of the participants at the Trump Jr. meeting, Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer Rinat Akhmetshin, as part of its probe into the law.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary panel, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, said this week that special counsel Robert Mueller has cleared Trump Jr. and Manafort for public testimony. Mueller is conducting the Justice Department's investigation and Grassley has said he wants to avoid conflicts.

The House Intelligence Committee is also probing the Russian meddling, and the top Democrat on that panel, California Rep. Adam Schiff, says the committee is contacting participants in the Trump Jr. meeting. Referencing Feinstein's comments about Mueller's clearance, he said his committee may consider public hearings "for particular witnesses" but noted it rarely holds open hearings.

The House panel is "reaching out to participants in the meeting with a request for testimony and documents, so that is very much in process at the moment," Schiff said.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 8/5/2017 1:53:33 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: MUELLER seeking info from the W.H. on Flynn -- SESSIONS' media attack just for Trump -- KELLY's new strict West Wing rules -- RYAN critiques Trump's immigration plan -- JOSH and BLAIR HOLMES welcome a son

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Morgan Stanley
08/05/2017 09:49 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. WELCOME TO THE LULL, hopefully. Congress is gone. The president is in Bedminster. The sleepy D.C. August is in full swing. Enjoy.

BREAKING - AP at 8:56 a.m.: "OKINAWA, Japan (AP) - U.S. Marine officials say a search is underway for service members after the 'mishap' of an aircraft off Australia coast."

INCOMING! -- NYT A1, "Mueller Seeks White House Documents on Flynn," by Matt Rosenberg, Matt Apuzzo and Mike Schmidt: "Investigators working for the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, recently asked the White House for documents related to the former national security adviser Michael T. Flynn, and have questioned witnesses about whether he was secretly paid by the Turkish government during the final months of the presidential campaign, according to people close to the investigation. Though not a formal subpoena, the document request is the first known instance of Mr. Mueller's team asking the White House to hand over records. In interviews with potential witnesses in recent weeks, prosecutors and F.B.I. agents have spent hours poring over the details of Mr. Flynn's business dealings with a Turkish-American businessman who worked last year with Mr. Flynn and his consulting business, the Flynn Intel Group.

"The company was paid \$530,000 to run a campaign to discredit an opponent of the Turkish government who has been accused of orchestrating last year's failed coup in the country. Investigators want to know if the Turkish government was behind those payments - and if the Flynn Intel Group made kickbacks to the businessman, Ekim Alptekin, for helping conceal the source of the money. The line of questioning shows that Mr. Mueller's inquiry has expanded into a full-fledged examination of Mr. Flynn's

financial dealings, beyond the relatively narrow question of whether he failed to register as a foreign agent or lied about his conversations and business arrangements with Russian officials." <http://nyti.ms/2ubct7K>

JOSH GERSTEIN with a REALITY CHECK -- "Sessions' broad attack on leaks aimed at an audience of one: Trump": "Dozens of reporters and a horde of photographers turned out for Attorney General Jeff Sessions' news conference Friday to announce a crackdown on leaks, but the most important target for his message wasn't in the room: President Donald Trump. Sessions' eight-minute broadside against leaks and his stern warning to leakers seemed to be aimed at trying to repair his badly frayed relationship with Trump, who has expressed regret for selecting Sessions and who has specifically complained that he was doing too little to fight the tidal wave of leaks that have swamped the Trump White House. ...

"Friday's event at Justice Department headquarters was carefully structured to ensure that Sessions' message reached Trump with the fewest distractions possible. If reporters had the chance to question the attorney general about the Russia investigation, he might have demurred because he has recused from the probe. But with the recusal at the core of Trump's complaints about Sessions, any televised scene of the attorney general broaching the subject could send the president into a blue rage. So, Sessions filed out after he spoke. Cameras were then shut off at Justice officials' insistence before Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein returned to take reporters' questions about the nitty-gritty of the leak crackdown." <http://politi.co/2wuqqys>

-- **"Leak Investigations Triple Under Trump, Sessions Says,"** by NYT's Charlie Savage and Eileen Sullivan: "[T]he Justice Department is pursuing about three times as many leak investigations as were open at the end of the Obama era, a significant devotion of resources to hunt down disclosures that have plagued the Trump administration." <http://nyti.ms/2utCMpc>

-- **@chucktodd:** "If DoJ media source threat is real (I assume it's not; just a show presser to please WH) then I look forward to ignoring that subpoena".

SHORING UP MCMASTER -- PETER BAKER in the NYT, **"Trump Defends McMaster as Conservatives Seek His Dismissal":** "President Trump defended Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, his embattled national security adviser, on Friday in the face of a full-bore campaign by the nationalist wing of his political coalition accusing him of undermining the president's agenda and calling for his dismissal. General McMaster has angered the political right by pushing out several conservatives on the national security staff and cautioning against ripping up the nuclear agreement with Iran negotiated by President Barack Obama without a strategy for what comes next. ... [A]fter two days of unrelenting attacks on General McMaster by conservative activists and news sites, complete with the Twitter hashtag #FireMcMaster, the president weighed in to quash such talk. 'General McMaster and I are working very well together,' he said in a statement emailed to The New York Times. 'He is a good man and very pro-Israel. I am grateful for the work he continues to do serving our country.' ...

"At one point on Friday, Breitbart News ... had close to a dozen headlines on its home page about General McMaster, like 'McMaster "Deeply Hostile to Israel and to Trump.'" The #FireMcMaster hashtag was tweeted more than 50,000 times since Wednesday." <http://nyti.ms/2vBxtsV>

BELOW THE SURFACE -- "National security adviser attempts to reconcile Trump's competing impulses on Afghanistan," by WaPo's Greg Jaffe and Phil Rucker: "In a disorderly West Wing in which decisions are evaluated not by ideology but by their impact on the Trump brand and their fealty to the president's campaign-trail promises, McMaster has struggled to become a dominant foreign policy force. ... Among his biggest challenges was holding the attention of the president. ... Trump had little time for in-depth briefings on Afghanistan's history, its complicated politics or its seemingly endless civil war.

"Even a single page of bullet points on the country seemed to tax the president's attention span on the subject, said senior White House officials. 'I call the president the two-minute man,' said one Trump confidant. 'The president has patience for a half-page.' ... The fight over the Afghanistan strategy points to a larger problem with the relationship between McMaster's NSC and the West Wing." <http://wapo.st/2vBY88O>

--REVEALING NUGGET: "A Pentagon strategy aimed at defeating the Islamic State was completed in early March but still has not been approved by the president, officials said."

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** The Path After Paris: President Trump moved to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement. Now what? [Read more.](#) *****

THE NEW REGIME -- "Kelly's Rules for Trump's West Wing: Stop Bickering, Get in Early, Make an Appointment," by WSJ's Mike Bender and Rebecca Ballhaus: "Staffers no longer loiter outside an open Oval Office door, hoping to catch the president's eye to be waved in for a chat or the chance to pitch a new idea. That door is now closed. Aides can't linger outside the chief of staff's office, either. White House staff waiting to see Mr. Kelly -- or other senior advisers in nearby suites -- are asked to remain in the lobby, where White House visitors sit on couches and can read a selection of daily newspapers. ... 'The problem here is that he won't have anyone to talk to, and he'll get frustrated,' said one person who regularly speaks with Mr. Trump. 'I give General Kelly four months.' ...

"Mr. Trump was impressed by Mr. Kelly's presentations at DHS, at times describing him as 'a killer.' He is also taken, said one official, by the 'presence' of his chief of staff, who stands about 6-foot-2 and tends to dominate the room. ... Mr. Trump kept Mr. Priebus on a shorter leash, expressing his irritation when his former chief of staff would hover in Oval Office meetings. At times, Mr. Trump charged him with menial tasks such as organizing small groups of reporters to glimpse the first few moments of a meeting with the president. ... People who have known Mr. Kelly for years describe his style as

no-nonsense. He introduces himself on phone calls and in emails to people he knows simply as 'Kelly.' 'If you're in a 10-minute meeting with him, he'll be quiet for the first nine minutes,' listening before making a decision or a pronouncement, said one person close to him. ...

"Running one of his first senior staff meetings, Mr. Kelly laid down clear lines of authority and ordered aides to stick to their assigned areas. Discussions with senators, U.S. House members or others on Capitol Hill must be reported to the White House's legislative affairs director, Marc Short. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Mr. Kelly said, must know about meetings with foreign diplomats. ... Mr. Kelly moved senior staff meetings to 8 a.m., instead of 8:45, and holds them around the long mahogany table of the Roosevelt Room. His predecessor, Mr. Priebus, held the meetings in his office, where the television was often turned on and where staff could often redirect the discussion away from the agenda." <http://on.wsj.com/2wurimF>

-- JOSH DAWSEY, "John Kelly's big challenge: Controlling the tweeter in chief": "[K]elly has said he would like to know what Trump is planning to tweet before he does so and would prefer that big decisions not be announced on Twitter -- but has privately conceded there will be late-night or early-morning missives he cannot review. Kelly is trying to put together a system in which top aides don't learn of decisions on Twitter, one where policy and personnel decisions are not first tweeted without having procedures in place to make them happen. ... Ironically, the announcement of Kelly's new role foreshadowed the challenges he faces. Kelly knew he was going to be named chief of staff, officials said. But he didn't know that Trump, sitting on the tarmac aboard Air Force One on July 28, would announce it on Twitter. Other senior administration officials first learned of the news through a buzzing phone, several officials said." <http://politi.co/2uaX47H>

-- STEP BACK AND THINK ABOUT THIS: The White House chief of staff has to develop a system to try to ensure his own senior White House aides don't learn about decisions through Twitter.

DELAYED -- "Trump's attack on Chinese trade gets sidelined over North Korea," by Andrew Restuccia, Eliana Johnson, Josh Dawsey and Nahal Toosi: "The White House had been preparing for a Friday announcement in which Trump planned to urge his administration to open a trade investigation into China's alleged violations of U.S. intellectual property rights and forced technology transfers, three administration officials said. But on Thursday afternoon, senior administration aides postponed the announcement at the urging of United Nations and State Department officials, who are in the sensitive final stages of convincing China to sign on to a U.N. resolution that would impose new sanctions on North Korea. U.N. and State Department officials warned that the trade announcement could kill their chances of winning Beijing's buy-in." <http://politi.co/2vzJCxz>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Trump may host visiting leaders at his N.J. golf club during upcoming U.N. gathering," by WaPo's Anne Gearan: "President Trump is

planning to host foreign leaders at his New Jersey golf club when he attends the annual U.N. General Assembly session next month, breaking decades of precedent for U.S. presidents, said people familiar with preparations for the gathering. The State Department is getting ready for an unspecified number of foreign meetings at the Bedminster, N.J., golf club over several days during the week of Sept. 18. ... Trump is expected to make his first presidential address to the General Assembly on Tuesday, Sept. 19. He is also likely to meet U.N. Secretary General António Guterres at the U.N. headquarters." <http://wapo.st/2v8qhBu>

-- **"Trump's trip to Bedminster prompts protesters to get creative,"** by Jake Lahut: "One idea is to go beyond the golf course, town to town, with vehicles blasting sound from speakers, such as former FBI director James Comey's Senate testimony or Trump's recent Boy Scout speech. 'There are literally too many soundbites to choose from,' said Dominae Leveille, an organizer with We the People." <http://politi.co/2utXCVp>

RYAN AGAINST TRUMP'S IMMIGRATION PLAN ... -- "House Speaker Paul Ryan casts doubt on President Donald Trump's plan to cut legal immigration," by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's Mary Spicuzza and Jason Stein: "'I just think arbitrary cuts to legal immigration don't take into effect the economy's needs as the boomers are retiring,' Ryan said in an interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. 'With baby boomers leaving the workforce, we're still going to have labor shortages in certain areas and that is where a well-reformed legal immigration system should be able to make up the difference.'

"Ryan cautioned he has yet to fully review the proposal and said he does want to overhaul the immigration system to focus on economic needs like dairy farms and research and engineering work. But he questioned the wisdom of actually cutting the number of immigrants entering the United States. 'I think legal immigration is good for our country. I'm a supporter of legal immigration,' Ryan said." <http://bit.ly/2uaCULb>

FLAGGING FOR STEPHEN MILLER -- Craig Romney, one of Mitt's sons, posted on Instagram yesterday (he has the handle @crackyenmor): "Grateful to the immigrants who spoke many languages, worshipped many ways, and made this country great. #ellisland". *Instapic* <http://bit.ly/2utDVNg>

RNC DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- "Three more RNC staffers set to exit," by Alex Isenstadt: "Less than a year into the midterm campaign season, the [RNC] is experiencing a wave of staff-level departures. Over the next several weeks, three RNC aides -- deputy chief data officer Liam O'Rourke, director of political data support Ashley Burns, and director of business intelligence Patrick Stewart -- are expected to leave. The exits, confirmed by three RNC officials, have surprised the tight-knit world of Republican operatives and signaled a broader upheaval within the committee's data department." <http://politi.co/2vrBPSR>

CLINTON WORLD -- "Hillary Clinton Hires Two Former Campaign Aides For 'Resistance' PAC," by BuzzFeed's Ruby Cramer: "Hillary Clinton has hired two political

operatives from her 2016 presidential campaign to help manage Onward Together, the project she founded this spring with former governor Howard Dean to fund and support a coalition of Democratic groups led by activists and organizers. The new additions, Emmy Ruiz and Adam Parkhomenko, held central roles on Clinton's campaign ... Clinton's new group, registered in May as a 501c4 organization with an affiliated super PAC, is working to establish a small but diverse cooperative of about 10 to 12 grassroots efforts, each one focused on a different area of the energy and activism set off by Donald Trump's election and presidency." <http://bzfd.it/2wuyPlz>

CNN'S BRIAN STELTER: "Other presidents paused to meet the press before going on vacation -- not Trump": "Trump will reach the 200-day mark in his presidency on Monday. He has held just one solo press conference, back on February 16, when he was less than one month into his presidency. ... At this point in 2009, President Obama had held 9 solo pressers, many of them about the country's economic recovery. At the same point in their respective presidencies, George W. Bush had held 3 solo pressers; Bill Clinton had held 8; George H.W. Bush had held 18; Ronald Reagan had held 3; and Jimmy Carter had held 12." <http://cnnmon.ie/2v8jGH7>

HOLLYWOODLAND - "Norman Lear plans to boycott Kennedy Center Honors reception hosted by Trump," by LATimes' Greg Braxton: "Legendary producer Norman Lear, one of the honorees of the upcoming Kennedy Center Honors, said he will not attend the pre-awards reception hosted by President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump in protest of some of the president's policies. Lear said he will attend the award ceremony at the Kennedy Center on Dec. 3 but won't go to the reception beforehand." <http://lat.ms/2hwUkzN>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR -- President Donald Trump reacts on seeing visitors to the White House before boarding Marine One en route to Bedminster, N.J., for vacation Aug. 4, 2017, in Washington, D.C. | Jacquelyn Martin/AP Photo.

SHOVEL READY HOLD UP -- "Why are these billions in pipeline projects stalled?," by Eric Wolff and Darius Dixon: "Billions of dollars' worth of shovel-ready infrastructure projects have been held up by a bureaucratic morass that President Donald Trump helped to create. Trump's slowness to fill vacancies at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is one reason for a growing backlog of natural gas pipelines and a gas export terminal awaiting approval from the agency, which has been unable to conduct major business since February. The waiting list has grown to at least \$13 billion worth of projects expected to generate more than 23,000 construction jobs, according to a POLITICO analysis - largely in states Trump won in November."

<http://politi.co/2utBOcB>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Martin Shkreli Found Guilty on Three Counts in Securities-Fraud Trial: Jury acquits 34-year-old former pharmaceutical executive on five counts, including conspiracy to commit wire fraud," by WSJ's Rebecca Davis O'Brien: "The 34-year-old Mr. Shkreli -- dubbed the Pharma Bro after his brash defense of the 2015 drug-price increase -- had taunted prosecutors during the trial as 'junior varsity' in comments to reporters and on his social-media accounts. As the verdict was read, Mr. Shkreli, dressed in a black polo shirt and khaki pants, twisted in his chair with his arms crossed. Mr. Shkreli was convicted of three counts related to securities fraud but acquitted of five other charges." <http://on.wsj.com/2vrAiMF>

HIGH TIMES -- "Huff, puff, pass? AG's pot fury not echoed by task force," by AP's Sadie Gurman: "The betting was that law-and-order Attorney General Jeff Sessions would come out against the legalized marijuana industry with guns blazing. But the task force Sessions assembled to find the best legal strategy is giving him no ammunition, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press. The Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, a group of prosecutors and federal law enforcement officials, has come up with no new policy recommendations to advance the attorney general's aggressively anti-marijuana views. The group's report largely reiterates the current Justice Department policy on marijuana." <http://bit.ly/2ub5GuP>

FUTURE OF MEDIA - "Google Is Developing Technology for Snapchat-Like Media Content," by WSJ's Amol Sharma and Jack Marshall: "Google is developing technology to let publishers create visual-oriented media content along the lines of Snapchat's 'Discover,' according to people familiar with the situation, upping the ante in a race among tech giants to dominate news dissemination on smartphones. Alphabet Inc.'s Google has been in discussions with several publishers, including Vox Media, CNN, Mic, the Washington Post and Time Inc., to participate in the project, which is dubbed 'Stamp' ... It could be announced as early as next week, one of the people said. Google is building the service around its 'AMP' mobile webpages, which are designed to load faster than regular webpages. The 'St' in Stamp stands for 'stories.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2v6mvu0>

MEDIAWATCH - "Fox News Host Sent Unsolicited Lewd Text Messages To Colleagues, Sources Say," by Yashar Ali in HuffPost: "Eric Bolling, a longtime Fox News host, sent an unsolicited photo of male genitalia via text message to at least two colleagues at Fox Business and one colleague at Fox News, a dozen sources told HuffPost. ... The women, who are Bolling's current and former Fox colleagues, concluded the message was from him because they recognized his number from previous work-related and informal interactions. The messages were sent several years ago, on separate occasions. The women did not solicit the messages, which they told colleagues were deeply upsetting and offensive. One of the recipients said that when she replied to Bolling via text, telling him never to send her such photos again, he did not respond.

"Reached Friday by HuffPost about the accusations against Bolling, a Fox spokesperson said, 'We were just informed of this and plan to investigate the matter.' When asked whether Bolling at any point had sent unsolicited lewd or inappropriate text messages or emails (including an image of a man's genitalia) to Fox News or Fox Business colleagues, his attorney Michael J. Bowe responded, 'Mr. Bolling recalls no such inappropriate communications, does not believe he sent any such communications, and will vigorously pursue his legal remedies for any false and defamatory accusations that are made.'" <http://bit.ly/2wuE4St>

--"AT&T Mulling Sell-Off Of Major Assets Under Turner After Time Warner Merger," by Deadline's Anita Busch and David Lieberman: "There are rumblings at the highest executive levels that AT&T's top executives are considering divesting some Time Warner assets -- including news organization CNN and celebrity gossip site TMZ -- after they merge. AT&T expects the Justice Department to approve its \$85 billion acquisition of Time Warner, and for the deal to close, by year end. ... CBS has long had its eye on CNN. The broadcast company's CEO, Les Moonves, said at Herb Allen's Sun Valley retreat last month that he would be interested if the cable news network became available. ... For TMZ, Deadline was told that AT&T is considering a sale to a private equity company." <http://bit.ly/2v8yAgy>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Now that President Trump has announced his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the 2015 Paris Agreement, what does it mean for the stated goals of the accord, and what might be the impact on markets and investors? [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **12 keepers** <http://politi.co/2vzK7HV>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- **"The New Yuppies:** How the aspirational class expresses its status in an age of inequality," by J.C. Pan in TNR: "This new elite is typified by the brownstone-dweller traipsing through Whole Foods with a yoga mat peeping from the top of her NPR tote; the new Prospect Heights mother who stops in at the lactation consultant before her Y7 class; the tech startup employee with the neatly trimmed beard and Everlane button-down who announces on Facebook that he's 'bumping the new Kendrick.'" <http://bit.ly/2vzL3Mw> (h/t ALDaily.com)

-- **"Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?"** by Jean Twenge in the September issue of The Atlantic: "More comfortable online than out partying, post-Millennials are safer, physically, than adolescents have ever been. But they're on the brink of a mental-health crisis." <http://theatl.in.tc/2v6O9Hd>

"The Big Sick,' South Asian Identity and Me," by NYT's Sopan Deb: "I never told my Bengali parents about my first kiss. ... They never knew about my high school crushes, my dates at Applebee's, or my first couple of girlfriends. I hid all this because I knew my

parents wouldn't approve. They had an arranged marriage. In India, where they grew up, choosing your life partner was uncommon." <http://nyti.ms/2v8shcK>
... **Trailer** <http://bit.ly/2vC36IX>

-- **"The Secret Life of the City Banana,"** by NYT's Annie Correal: "Millions of bananas arrive every week in New York City. It takes a lot to get them from the boat to the bodega." <http://nyti.ms/2vrDCaB>

-- **"The Secret Economic Lives of Animals,"** by Ben Crair in Bloomberg Businessweek: "If Adam Smith had strapped on a bee suit - or a safari jacket, or a scuba mask - he could have discovered that the animal kingdom is, in fact, a chamber of commerce." <https://bloom.bg/2wuiOfi>

-- **"She Was Convicted of Killing Her Mother. Prosecutors Withheld the Evidence That Would Have Freed Her,"** by Emily Bazelon in the N.Y. Times Magazine: "By the time Noura Jackson's conviction was overturned, she had spent nine years in prison. This type of prosecutorial error is almost never punished." <http://nyti.ms/2v8tj8X>

-- **"A Baccarat Binge Helped Launder the World's Biggest Cyberheist,"** by Alan Katz and Wenxin Fan in Bloomberg Businessweek: "How do you make \$81 million stolen from the Bangladesh central bank disappear? Run it through an Asian laundromat." <https://bloom.bg/2v8I4bT>

-- **"Notes from a Baby-Names Obsessive:** My son was almost due. What would I call him?" by Lauren Collins in The New Yorker: "[W]e were going to call him Louis, but Louis turned out to be the tenth most popular boys' name in France, and the seventh most popular in Paris, where we live, and, even in this age of nominative nonconformity, we worried that he might enter school and find it crawling with more Louises than a chart of Bourbon monarchs." <http://bit.ly/2vrzKpZ>

-- **"After the Shooting:** A year in the life of Gwen Woods," by Jaeah Lee in California Sunday Magazine: "Mario Woods was the 906th person in the United States to be shot and killed by police in 2015 - 228 of whom were black men - according to a count maintained by The Washington Post." <http://bit.ly/2hw5q7U> (h/t Longform.org)

-- **"Finding Darko,"** by Sam Borden in ESPN The Magazine - per Longform.org's description: "The NBA's greatest draft bust. Darko Milicic is now an enthusiastic farmer of cherries in his native Serbia." <http://es.pn/2ud7tDH>

-- **"All the Greedy Young Abigail Fishers and Me,"** by Jia Tolentino in Jezebel: "This job-writing college essays for Abigail Fishers-was the only job I have ever been truly ashamed of, and I am so ashamed of it now that it hurts." <http://bit.ly/29i2vdy>

-- **"Losing It in the Anti-Dieting Age,"** by Taffy Brodesser-Akner on the cover of the NYT Magazine: "The agonies of being overweight - or running a diet company - in a culture that likes to pretend it only cares about health, not size." <http://nyti.ms/2vrzeJ1> ...

The cover <http://politi.co/2hlUV78>

-- **"How Two Brothers Turned Seven Lines of Code Into a \$9.2 Billion Startup,"** by Bloomberg Businessweek's Ashlee Vance: "Now, Stripe's Patrick and John Collison are teaming with Amazon to grab even more control over the global flow of commerce." <https://bloom.bg/2fhQGcd>

-- **"When Should a Child Be Taken from His Parents?"** by The New Yorker's Larissa MacFarquhar: "In family court, judges must decide whether the risks at home outweigh the risks of separating a family." <http://bit.ly/2wutCtW>

-- **"Shot in the Dark,"** by Patrick Blanchfield in Esquire: "Spending six days in a cave without any light means hallucinations, hypothermia, and the potential for fatal falls. Why would anyone volunteer for one of the most extreme reality shows ever?" <http://bit.ly/2vCaHB3> (h/t Longreads.com)

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Marc Lotter at the bar at Fiola Mare last night. Sally Quinn was also seen with son Quinn Bradlee eating lobster and oysters on the outside deck of the restaurant (her favorite in D.C.) ... Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) dining at Millie's yesterday in Spring Valley.

BUSH ALUMNI -- JOEL KAPLAN has been named to the board of directors of the George W. Bush Presidential Center. **Henry Hager**, Jenna Bush Hager's husband, also joined the board.

ENGAGED -- Amanda Gonzalez, communications director for Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) and House Oversight and Government Reform, got engaged Friday afternoon to **William Thompson**, policy analyst at the Charles Group, a small boutique firm. "We met through mutual friends in D.C. He proposed at Ambar where we had our first date." She posts on Instagram: "Completely overwhelmed with love and joy. We're engaged!" **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2v6MvWg>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Blair Latoff Holmes, VP of media and external comms at the U.S. Chamber, and **Josh Holmes**, president and founding partner of Cavalry and longtime aide and adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, posts on Facebook: "We are overjoyed to announce the birth of our son, William Wade Holmes. He was born [Thursday morning] at 9:42 weighing in at a healthy 8 lbs 3 oz. and a rangy 21 inches. P.S. In case anyone wondered whether the grandchild of William S. Latoff had a full head of hair, as you suspected, he does." **Pics** <http://politi.co/2urxPNI> ... <http://politi.co/2uqRugG>

OUT AND ABOUT -- IRAQI AMBASSADOR FAREED YASSEEN hosted a cocktail

party on Thursday night to honor Amb. Stuart Jones who retires at the end of August. Canapés and mostly Iraqi-inspired finger food, including slices of Mosul kibbeh, were served. **SPOTTED:** Robin Wright, Kim Dozier, Ben Kesling, Ken Pollack and Andrea Koppel, Oman Amb. Hunaina al-Mughairy, Yemen Amb. Ahmed Bin Mubarak, Palestinian Amb. Dr. Husam Zomlot, Brig. Gen. Joseph Rank, Will Bohlen, Nahal Toosi, Trudy Rubin, Laura Rozen, Glen Howard, Caryle Murphy, Dr. Zuhair Humadi, Gina Chon, Margaret Warner, Dr. Mike Bell, Tony Pfaff, Joel Rayburn, Derek Harvey, Brett McGurk, Doug Ollivant, Ken and Elizabeth Close, Yael Lempert, Terry Wolff, Timothy Lenderking, Richard Albright, Jonathan Cohen, Rochdi Younsi, Alison Hills, Karan Bhatia and cellist Karim Wasfi, head of the Iraqi symphony orchestra.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Sean Cox, aspiring political pundit and eventual CA politician someday, turned 18 (hat tip: Joe Brettell)

BIRTHDAYS: Ryan Wrasse, comms director for Sen. Thune ... Taylor Griffin ... Blackstone spokesman Matt Anderson ... Sharon Weber, DSCC Midwest finance director and a Duckworth and Durbin alum ... Jeremy Flantzer ... Matt Mandel ... Heidi Nel, principal at the Raben Group and partner at the Truman Project (h/t Jen Nedeau) ... Rufus Gifford, former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, is 43 ... Bloomberg congressional reporter James Rowley ... Kris Eisenla ... Nicolas Boulet, founder and managing director of First Growth Capital Management ... Nev. Gov. Brian Sandoval is 54 ... Rep. Mike Doyle (D-Pa.) is 64 ... POLITICO alum Lila Cohn, now getting her masters at UPenn ... CBS News' Alicia Amling ... Cary Gibson, VP at Farragut Square Group ... RNC national deputy political director Molly Donlin O'Driscoll ...

... **Pete Snyder** is 45 ... Cicely Simpson ... Colleen Fisher ... WaPo's Michael Chandler ... Donte Donald ... James Franklin Blue III ... Christine Forester ... LATimes' Jim Puzzanghera ... Jenniffer González is 41 ... Ashley Pitts ... Kathy Rust ... Obama WH alum Monique Dorsainvil ... Monica Thompson ... Dana Ferreira ... Nicholas Rodman ... Steven Leraris ... Scott Vance ... Kristy Huxhold ... Jeff Kupfer ... Mary Beth Bakke ... POLITICO alum Abby Milberg ... ABC News' Luis Martinez ... Patrick Ewing ... Julie Hughes ... Corey Johnson ... Katie Vlietstra Wonnenberg ... Jason Pollock is 36 ... Ron Bouchard is 51 ... Topf Wells ... Dennis Lonergan ... Tom Healy ... Miguel and Alejandro Balkin (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

-- **NBC's "Meet the Press":** Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) ... Gov. Jerry Brown. Panel: Dan Balz, David French, Heather McGhee and Andrea Mitchell

-- **ABC's "This Week":** HHS Secretary Tom Price ... John Podesta ... Sergei Ryabkov. Panel: Mary Bruce, Alex Castellanos, Matthew Dowd and Julie Pace

-- **CBS's "Face the Nation":** Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) ... Gov. John Kasich and Gov. John Hickenlooper... Jeh Johnson. Panel: Jamelle Bouie, Jennifer Jacobs, Susan Page and Reihan Salam

-- **"Fox News Sunday"**: Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.). Panel: Jason Riley, Rachel Bade, Rich Lowry and Charles Lane

-- **Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Leon Panetta ... Ayaan Hirsi Ali ... Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). Panel: Brad Blakeman and Democratic strategist Jessica Tarlov

-- **Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Ellison Barber ... Mollie Hemingway ... Joe Trippi

-- **CNN's "Inside Politics"**: Perry Bacon, Karoun Demirjian, Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Michael Shear (substitute anchor: CNN's Dana Bash)

-- **CNN's "State of the Union"**: Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) ... Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisc) ... Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.). Panel: Nina Turner, Rick Santorum, Amanda Carpenter and Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.)

-- **CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Al Gore. Panel: Julia Ioffe, Gideon Rose and Dan Senor

-- **CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Richard Tofel, Jeff Greenfield and Kathleen Hall Jamieson ... Matt Schlapp and Trevor Timm ... Margaret Talev ... Oliver Darcy

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: Carlos Diaz-Rosillo ... Antonio Ledezma's daughter Oriette Ledezma ... Al Gore ... actor Cristián de la Fuente

-- **C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: Jeff Moulton ... **"Newsmakers"**: Rep. Richard Neal (D-Mass.), questioned by Richard Rubin and Rachel Bade ... **"Q&A"**: Cate Lineberry

-- **Hearst / Sony's "Matter of Fact"** with Soledad O'Brien: Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.) and Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) ... former HUD Assistant Secretary and the Urban Institute's Erika Poethig ... Silver State Health Insurance Exchange's Heather Korbolic ... report on the Presidential Commission on Election Integrity ... a reflection from Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on her friendship with the late Justice Antonin Scalia

-- **Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2r37J6h>): Reagan Legacy Foundation president Michael Reagan

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley**: What's the real impact of President Trump's move to pull the U.S. out of the global accords to combat climate change? Current country commitments are insufficient to hold global warming to under 2° Celsius from preindustrial levels, the stated goal of the accords, so little changes in the immediate future. Meanwhile, countries abroad in Europe and China have doubled down on their investments to combat climate change. Trump's decision diverges from what many companies and investors have been signaling lately, and Morgan Stanley's view is that

most sectors are currently driven by economics and technology rather than policy. Read more from Morgan Stanley. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com
Sent: Thur 11/2/2017 10:17:26 PM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

I am not trying to be a pest, but can someone please answer my inquiries?

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 5:42 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Hi, I don't think my question was especially difficult: given that Admin. Pruitt has explicitly said he would like to lighten regulatory burden, can you please quantify how he has done so?

I'd also asked about how many Regional hqs he has visited. No answer to that, either.

I'm sure you're all very busy, but he is a public official, running a public agency. I believe the people deserve answers.

Thank you.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 12:57 PM Alexander Nazaryan <alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... "We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com] **On Behalf**
Of Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

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Alexander Nazaryan

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Senior Writer

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Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Graham, Amy
Sent: Sun 9/3/2017 8:38:38 PM
Subject: Fwd: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com>
Date: September 3, 2017 at 4:36:23 PM EDT
To: "Graham, Amy" <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

It's actually not, Amy. For one, it's unsigned except for the brief part at the end. Why does the EPA single out one reporter when the story was double-bylined? Is it normal practice for US government agencies to target specific reporters with unrelated personal criticism in response to stories? Who at EPA wrote the statement? Were Michael Abboud, James Hewitt, or other former RNC staffers involved in drafting the statement? Again, it would be easier to discuss this by phone. I'm at 571-255-9442. Mr. Abboud declined to say whether he or Mr. Hewitt were involved in drafting the statement.

Matthew Nussbaum
POLITICO White House Reporter
Mnussbaum@politico.com
C: (571)-255-9442
@MatthewNussbaum

From: Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 4:33:39 PM
To: Matthew Nussbaum
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

The press release is pretty self explanatory. What are your specific questions? I'm not in a place to chat right this second.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 3, 2017, at 4:26 PM, Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com> wrote:

Thanks, I actually just spoke with Michael Abboud who recommended I get in touch with you. Please give me a call when you get a chance: 571-255-9442.

Trying to get some additional information about this statement: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-response-aps-misleading-story>

EPA Response To The AP's Misleading Story | US EPA
www.epa.gov

Matthew Nussbaum
POLITICO White House Reporter
Mnussbaum@politico.com
C: (571)-255-9442
@MatthewNussbaum

From: Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 4:24:17 PM
To: Matthew Nussbaum
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

Matthew- Has anyone gotten back to you yet? What's your specific request?

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 3, 2017, at 4:09 PM, Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com> wrote:

Hi,

Can someone please give me call at their earliest convenience: 571-255-9442.

Thanks so much.

Matt

Matthew Nussbaum
POLITICO White House Reporter
Mnussbaum@politico.com
C: (571)-255-9442
@MatthewNussbaum

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 3:10:06 PM
Subject: RE: Updated Proposal...

So who needs to sign it?

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 10:59 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

George has been dragging his feet on this for 7 weeks. Attached is the contract.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 9:38 AM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; 'jpounder@definerscorp.com' <jpounder@definerscorp.com>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

George –

I am adding you to this email. Can you please contact Joe Pounder and circle back with me. I believe Definers is able to do morning summaries or morning media matrixs that we can circulate within the agency to interested people and they are also capable of doing live-time alerts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thank you,

Jahan

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
Cc: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Thur 7/20/2017 12:33:20 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17
DRAFT EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17.docx

EPA Morning News Clips 7.20.17

WNYT: EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday. The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

Washington Examiner: Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration. Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The Hill: GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others. The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving. Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Washington Post: John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate. The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

Wall Street Journal: Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week. The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

Washington Examiner: Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus. "We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic." Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act.

New York Times: Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision "very unfair to the president." In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions's decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. "Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else," Mr. Trump said.

The Associated Press: Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election. Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday. Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

WNYT

<http://wnyt.com/news/epa-environmental-protection-agency-saratoga-springs-concerns/4547247/>

EPA hears calls for more PCB cleanup at public hearing

By WNYT Staff, 7/19/17 11:12 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency says the cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River is on its way to protecting human health and the environment. A group of concerned citizens, environmental advocates, lawmakers, and the state DEC voiced their opposition to that conclusion at a public hearing on Wednesday.

The EPA's latest projection is some people will be able to safely eat fish caught in the Hudson River regularly in 55 years. That was not soon enough for Stuyvesant resident Lee Jamison.

"55 years, even five years is unacceptable. We've been fighting to clean up the river for 50 years," said Jamison.

Since General Electric finished up dredging the Hudson River in 2015, the EPA has been working on analyzing the cleanup. The public hearing at the Hilton comes at the EPA's conclusion of a 1,000 page five-year report on the cleanup.

The EPA says General Electric dumped its first load of PCBs into the river from its two plants in Washington County in 1947.

GE removed 310,000 pounds of PCBs from the river. It was twice what the EPA expected to find. That is one of the reasons the environmental group Riverkeeper says the EPA needs to change the cleanup plan accordingly.

"First, the levels of PCBs in the surface sediments are much higher than EPA expected. Second of all, the PCB levels in fish are much higher than EPA expected. What that means is even if the decay rates that EPA predicts occur the cleanup will still be decades late on its target," said Richard Webster, Riverkeeper Legal Program Director.

The state DEC, along with more than 40 state lawmakers also disagree with the EPA's approach.

"They are saying 50 years, their sister agencies using the same data doing a different analysis, are saying it's over a century until people can eat fish out of the river more than once a week, it's not acceptable," said Assem. Carrie Woerner, D-Round Lake.

The EPA says more dredging wouldn't significantly speed up the timeline before Hudson River fish are edible again.

There could be a third public hearing. The first was held in Poughkeepsie. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are demanding one at the end of the pollution's path, in New York City. The public comment period lasts until September 1.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-expected-to-drop-harley-davidsons-3-million-fine-for-epa-violations/article/2629160>

Trump expected to drop Harley-Davidson's \$3 million fine for EPA violations

By John Siciliano, 7/19/17 6:21 PM

The Justice Department plans to drop a \$3 million financial requirement that motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson had to pay for emissions violations under the Obama administration.

Harley-Davidson was required to pay the money to make up for its environmental violations by funding programs that help reduce air pollution.

The company had agreed to pay a \$12 million fine, in addition to the \$3 million, to settle Environmental Protection Agency claims that 340,000 of its motorcycles emitted pollution at rates that exceeded federal standards.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/overnights/342815-overnight-energy-gop-takes-on-endangered-species-reform>

GOP moves to reform Endangered Species Act

By Timothy Cama and Devin Henry, 7/19/17 6:06 PM

Congressional Republicans launched efforts Wednesday aimed at reforming the Endangered Species Act to make it more friendly for states, landowners, industry and others.

The debates in the House and Senate were on bills with specific, limited purposes, not the full-scale comprehensive reforms that Republicans and some industries have been craving.

Nonetheless, the GOP made it clear that they want to make significant changes to a law that they

see as outdated, ineffective and unnecessarily costly for states and land users.

Democrats, meanwhile, see the proposals as significant threats to a bedrock environmental law and a handout to industries, including oil and natural gas.

The House Natural Resources Committee discussed five bills whose effects would include allowing the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to use economic costs to deny listing a species as endangered or threatened, require the agency to prioritize input in listing decisions from states, remove the gray wolf from the endangered list and limit payouts of attorneys' fees in Endangered Species Act (ESA) litigation.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, meanwhile, debated legislation meant to boost hunting and fishing that has a provision attached to undo the gray wolf listing.

The Obama administration tried to delist the gray wolf, but a federal court reversed the decision. Provisions in both the House and the Senate would instruct the FWS to reinstate the delisting and declare that it is not subject to review by the courts.

"In short, the ESA doesn't work," said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah). "We have to find a way to reform it so that it actually solves problems, not just continues on the process. Hopefully, working with our colleagues in the Senate and the administration, we can lay a foundation for ESA reform that will do us well."

Rep. Raúl Grijalva (Ariz.), the top Democrat on the panel, shot back.

"The Endangered Species Act works," he said.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/john-mccain-republican-senator-from-arizona-has-a-brain-tumor/2017/07/19/3331c5fa-6cdf-11e7-b9e2-2056e768a7e5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_mccain-845pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.70b0d6ddd8a1

John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, diagnosed with brain tumor

By Sean Sullivan, Karoun Demirjian, and Paul Kane 7/19/17

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, his office said Wednesday, throwing into doubt when and if he will return to Washington to resume his duties in the Senate.

The Mayo Clinic said doctors diagnosed a tumor called a glioblastoma after surgery to remove a blood clot above McCain's left eye last week. The senator and his family are considering treatment options, including a combination of chemotherapy and radiation, according to the hospital.

McCain, 80, has been away from the Senate this week, recovering from the surgery and undergoing tests. His office issued a statement describing him "in good spirits" and noting that his doctors say his underlying health is excellent — but not indicating when he will return to the Senate.

Glioblastoma is an aggressive type of brain cancer, and the prognosis for this kind of cancer is generally poor. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) survived less than 15 months after his was found in 2008. McCain's doctors said the "tissue of concern" was removed during the blood-clot procedure.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/gop-senators-lunch-with-trump-over-health-bills-troubles-1500483205>

Trump Implores GOP Senators to Come Together Over Troubled Health Bill

By Louise Radnofsky, Kristina Peterson, and Stephanie Armour, 7/19/17 10:26 PM

President Donald Trump stepped into the health-care debate with a new assertiveness Wednesday, imploring GOP senators to revive their effort to repeal and replace Obamacare after it had been left for dead earlier this week.

The president's rallying cry—part exhortation and part warning—sparked a fresh round of conversations with senators about what it will take to get their support, and Vice President Mike Pence planned to deliver another pitch Wednesday night.

“Any senator who votes against starting debate is really telling America that you're fine with Obamacare,” Mr. Trump said before a lunch with the senators Wednesday. He gestured at one wavering GOP lawmaker, Dean Heller of Nevada, saying, “He wants to remain a senator, doesn't he?” and warned lawmakers not to leave town in August without a deal.

Senate Republican leaders conceded defeat earlier this week on their effort to roll back and replace the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare, but at Mr. Trump's urging, they dug in Wednesday for what is expected to be the final push. Senate Republicans said they were hoping to rustle up 50 votes for a third version of the bill.

Mr. Trump, telling the senators they were “very close” to a deal, signaled the White House would take a more aggressive role in wrangling the 50 votes need to pass the bill. The GOP president suggested that Republicans had it easy in voting for the 2010 law's repeal when his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, was in office because they knew he would veto it and there would be no consequences.

“I'm ready to act, I have pen in hand, believe me, I'm sitting in that office. You've never had that before,” Mr. Trump said. “For seven years, you've had an easy rap: ‘We'll repeal, we'll replace, and he's never going to sign it.’ ”

GOP leaders' immediate challenge is mustering 50 Republican lawmakers to approve a

procedural motion that would allow debate to begin on their health-care bill.

Adding to the uncertainty, Sen. John McCain's office disclosed late Wednesday that the Arizona Republican has been diagnosed with a type of brain tumor known as a glioblastoma, and that the timing of his return to the Senate would depend on consultations with his medical team.

GOP senators said Wednesday night that the indefinite absence of Mr. McCain made their quest to get 50 votes on the health-care bill harder. "That does complicate things," said Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.).

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said after the White House lunch that a vote on that motion would happen next week, regardless of whether it was expected to pass, and that he had "every expectation" of trying to eke out a bill with majority support after that.

"I want to disabuse any of you of the notion that we will not have that vote next week," Mr. McConnell said.

GOP leaders hope that once debate begins and senators offer a variety of amendments, a majority will emerge for some version. Earlier this week, three Republicans—Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia—said they would oppose the motion to proceed on a repeal-only bill. Unless one of them changes her mind, debate can't begin because Democrats are uniformly opposed.

Among the amendments may be one to largely repeal the 2010 law without an immediate replacement. An estimate released Wednesday by the Congressional Budget Office found that such a move would leave 32 million more people uninsured and would double premiums by 2026, compared with current law. The measure would reduce federal deficits by \$473 billion over the coming decade, the CBO estimated.

About 20 GOP senators huddled for more than two hours Wednesday night, but it wasn't clear if they had gotten any closer to securing the needed 50 votes. "Hard to say," Mr. Toomey said upon leaving the meeting.

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus came to the meeting but was asked to stay in a room separate from the one where senators held their discussion because some lawmakers wanted to speak privately, an aide said.

“We’re at our best when we’re among ourselves,” said Sen. John Kennedy (R., La.)

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R., Alaska), an opponent of the repeal-only plan, was noncommittal on her stance after the meeting. Ms. Capito, also an opponent of that approach, declined to comment on the meeting.

The GOP currently holds 52 seats in the Senate, leaving it vulnerable to defections from conservatives, centrists or any senator with a home-state concern. Democrats have remained unified in their desire to preserve Mr. Obama’s signature domestic policy achievement.

GOP leaders are faced in the days ahead with finding ways to lure back at least some of the GOP senators who have said in recent days they couldn’t support the latest version of a bill aimed at overhauling the nation’s health-care system.

Ms. Capito, for example, is among those who have protested the bill’s cuts to Medicaid, the federal-state health program for the poor. The administration is pushing the notion of waivers for states to redesign their Medicaid programs, including more support for low-income people. Sen. Roy Blunt (R., Mo.) said Wednesday senators had discussed the idea at lunch.

Ms. Murkowski has similar concerns as well as a broader worry about her state’s fragile insurance market. Mr. Trump cited the current struggles of Alaska’s insurance markets as a reason for her to take action.

Another holdout, Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah), spoke with the president Tuesday, and Mr. Trump appeared open to the changes the senator wants, a spokesman for Mr. Lee said. A White House

aide said the administration is open to any provision that increases GOP support for the bill.

Mr. Lee has been especially concerned about alterations that were made to a provision of the GOP bill written by Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), which was designed to lower premiums by allowing insurers to sell cheaper, less-comprehensive plans than allowed under current law.

Similarly, GOP leaders have said they could address some of the concerns of Sen. Jerry Moran (R., Kan.) that the bill could negatively affect his state.

Before this week, the president had been less active in the negotiations in the Senate than he was in helping pass health-care legislation in the House.

The question is whether his late intervention can turn the tide. Some Republicans have been quietly skeptical of the president's arm's-length approach to Senate negotiations, though others have said he has been smart to hold back.

"Do the tectonic plates break and begin to move?" said Sen. Bill Cassidy (R., La.), after the meeting. "I can tell you they weren't before that meeting. The fact that the president comes in and very much emphasizes the need for momentum can break those plates."

"We are getting close -- the issues are narrowing," added Sen. Ron Johnson (R., Wis.), a conservative senator who has said his support for a GOP bill isn't guaranteed.

"There is still a hope on behalf of the administration and a lot of senators too that we can get there," said Sen. John Thune (R., S.D.), a member of the chamber's leadership. "We're going to take one more shot at it."

For months, lobbyists, GOP strategists and White House officials have described the GOP health bill in vivid metaphors, ranging from the biblical resurrection of Lazarus to the bathtub scene in "Fatal Attraction," where an apparently vanquished villain roars back to life.

Heading into this week, a senior White House official predicted, “This bill will have been declared dead once, and resurrected at least once.” Officials also regularly cite the House’s success in passing a health bill after legislation was initially pulled from the floor in March.

Democrats, for their part, are seeking to use Mr. Trump’s revival of the GOP push to draw fresh fuel for their campaigns.

“Like the armored and mummified White Walkers from Game of Thrones, Trumpcare is hard to kill,” Sen. Jeff Merkley (D., Ore.) wrote Wednesday in a fundraising email. “Republicans continue reanimating their terrible bill to kick millions of Americans off of their health care... Chip in now and support my efforts to kill this bill once and for all!”

Democrats also hammered senators such as Mr. Heller of Nevada and Jeff Flake of Arizona, who are facing re-election campaigns in 2018, over the prospect of Medicaid cuts.

Among those warning of dire consequences if Republican senators don’t repeal Obamacare is Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel. She wrote in an email to GOP donors and supporters Wednesday that “we could lose the midterm elections” because “some in the Senate are refusing to even put a simple repeal bill on [Mr. Trump’s] desk.”

Conservative groups also joined in, including the Senate Conservatives Fund, a political-action committee, whose head Ken Cuccinelli said Wednesday the group would hold Senate Republicans accountable if they failed to pass health-care legislation.

In the Washington swamp decried by Mr. Trump, Mr. Cuccinelli said, “Mitch McConnell is the head alligator.”

Such threats may have limited effect on some of the Republican dissenters. Ms. Collins and Ms. Capito don’t face re-election until 2020, and Ms. Murkowski isn’t up until 2022. Still,

conservative activists said they hope to send a broader message to Republicans about the importance of sticking to their promises.

“It’s not just about these senators; it’s about the state of the Republican party,” said Rachael Slobodien, spokeswoman for the conservative Club for Growth. “This is a much bigger fight.”

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/senate-holdouts-optimistic-after-late-meetings-to-revive-obamacare-replacement-bill/article/2629188>

Senate holdouts 'optimistic' after late meetings to revive Obamacare replacement bill.

By Robert King and Susan Ferrechio

Senate Republicans late Wednesday moved to revive legislation to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, offering changes to the bill in a two-hour meeting with moderate and conservative holdouts that lawmakers said brought them closer to consensus.

"We had some great discussions," Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the Washington Examiner. "I'm entirely optimistic."

Lee is among the Republican lawmakers who refused to support a motion to proceed to a debate on the repeal and replace bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act. Lee wants language to ensure lower premiums by allowing health insurers to offer plans outside of the Obamacare mandates and in a separate pool from high-risk consumers.

Another "no" on the motion to proceed, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she remains undecided but hopeful.

"I am encouraged by the level of discussion that we had," Murkowski said.

Republican leaders are looking for ways to lure in moderates like Murkowski and Shelly Moore Capito, of West Virginia, who fear BCRA's reduction in Medicaid growth will hurt their states. They are offering additional Medicaid funding for Alaska, West Virginia and other Medicaid-dependent states, but the offer has not flipped any "no" votes yet.

The meeting, involving more than a dozen GOP lawmakers, was interrupted by the news that Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was diagnosed with a brain cancer.

"We prayed," Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., told reporters. "It was very emotional, almost kind of stunned disbelief for a minute." Hoeven said the group asked Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., a former minister, "to lead us in prayer."

McCain's health status further muddles the fate of the bill, because it takes away, at least for now, one of the 52 Senate GOP votes in play. Republicans need at least 50 to advance the bill, and Vice President Mike Pence would break the tie in the event of a 50-50 vote.

McCain has not indicated when he might return to the Senate and is faced with the possibility of chemotherapy and radiation to treat his cancer.

"Obviously, I think more people are worried about his health than thinking about the math," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn. "But you understand the math. Obviously it makes things difficult."

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is promising a vote early next week on proceeding to a bill, but it could be one of two options.

Republican leaders want the BCRA to advance, but they are threatening Republicans with a 2015 alternative bill that repeals most of Obamacare without a replacement. All but one Republican voted for it in 2015, in part because it faced a certain veto from former President Barack Obama and would never be enacted.

Many GOP lawmakers would oppose a straight repeal vote now because it could well become law. But they are eager to avoid a contradictory and politically perilous vote on the measure.

Murkowski said she would oppose proceeding on a bill to repeal Obamacare without a replacement, but suggested the GOP leadership has not signaled which measure would be taken up next week.

"We don't have a clear determination as to what it is we are voting for," Murkowski said.

Wednesday night's meeting marked a kind of reset for the healthcare debate in the Senate, which essentially imploded earlier in the week when several senators, including Lee, announced their opposition, killing an effort to bring the BCRA to the floor.

Following a White House meeting Wednesday with President Trump, the holdouts are back at the table, and leadership is eager to make a deal.

Hoeven said "everyone is throwing out ideas, which is good from the standpoint that people are really hashing through some things so hopefully we are making some progress."

The New York Times

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/us/politics/trump-interview-sessions-russia.html?_r=0

Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions

By Peter Baker, Michael Schmidt, and Maggie Haberman, 7/19/17

President Trump said on Wednesday that he never would have appointed Attorney General Jeff Sessions had he known Mr. Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation that has dogged his presidency, calling the decision "very unfair to the president."

In a remarkable public break with one of his earliest political supporters, Mr. Trump complained that Mr. Sessions's decision ultimately led to the appointment of a special counsel that should not have happened. "Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself, he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else," Mr. Trump said.

In a wide-ranging interview with The New York Times, the president also accused James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he fired in May, of trying to leverage a dossier of compromising material to keep his job. Mr. Trump criticized both the acting F.B.I. director who has been filling in since Mr. Comey's dismissal and the deputy attorney general who recommended it. And he took on Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel now leading the investigation into Russian meddling in last year's election.

Mr. Trump said Mr. Mueller was running an office rife with conflicts of interest and warned investigators against delving into matters too far afield from Russia. Mr. Trump never said he would order the Justice Department to fire Mr. Mueller, nor would he outline circumstances under which he might do so. But he left open the possibility as he expressed deep grievance over an investigation that has taken a political toll in the six months since he took office.

Asked if Mr. Mueller's investigation would cross a red line if it expanded to look at his family's finances beyond any relationship to Russia, Mr. Trump said, "I would say yes." He would not say what he would do about it. "I think that's a violation. Look, this is about Russia."

While the interview touched on an array of issues, including health care, foreign affairs and politics, the investigation dominated the conversation. He said that as far as he knew, he was not under investigation himself, despite reports that Mr. Mueller is looking at whether the president obstructed justice by firing Mr. Comey.

"I don't think we're under investigation," he said. "I'm not under investigation. For what? I didn't do anything wrong."

Describing a newly disclosed informal conversation he had with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia during a dinner of world leaders in Germany this month, Mr. Trump said they talked for about 15 minutes, mostly about “pleasantries.” But Mr. Trump did say that they talked “about adoption.” Mr. Putin banned American adoptions of Russian children in 2012 after the United States enacted sanctions on Russians accused of human rights abuses, an issue that remains a sore point in relations with Moscow.

Mr. Trump acknowledged that it was “interesting” that adoptions came up since his son, Donald Trump Jr., said that was the topic of a meeting he had with several Russians with ties to the Kremlin during last year’s campaign. Even though emails show that the session had been set up to pass along incriminating information about Hillary Clinton, the president said he did not need such material from Russia about Mrs. Clinton last year because he already had more than enough.

The interview came as the White House was trying to regain momentum after the collapse of health care legislation even while the president’s son, son-in-law and former campaign chairman were being asked to talk with Senate investigators. Relaxed and engaged, the president sat at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, with only one aide, Hope Hicks, sitting in on the interview. The session was sandwiched between a White House lunch with Republican senators and an event promoting “Made in America” week.

Over the course of 50 minutes, the often-fiery Mr. Trump demonstrated his more amiable side, joking about holding hands with the president of France and musing about having a military parade down a main avenue in Washington. He took satisfaction that unemployment has fallen and stock markets have risen to record highs on his watch.

At one point, his daughter Ivanka arrived at the doorway with her daughter, Arabella, who ran to her grandfather and gave him a kiss. He greeted the 6-year-old girl as “baby,” then urged her to show the reporters her ability to speak Chinese. She obliged.

But Mr. Trump left little doubt during the interview that the Russia investigation remained a sore point. His pique at Mr. Sessions, in particular, seemed fresh even months after the attorney general’s recusal. Mr. Sessions was the first senator to endorse Mr. Trump’s candidacy and was rewarded with a key cabinet slot, but has been more distant from the president lately.

“Jeff Sessions takes the job, gets into the job, recuses himself, which frankly I think is very unfair to the president,” he added. “How do you take a job and then recuse yourself? If he would have recused himself before the job, I would have said, ‘Thanks, Jeff, but I’m not going to take you.’ It’s extremely unfair — and that’s a mild word — to the president.”

Mr. Trump also faulted Mr. Sessions for his testimony during Senate confirmation hearings when Mr. Sessions said he had not had “communications with the Russians” even though he had met at least twice with Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak. “Jeff Sessions gave some bad answers,” the president said. “He gave some answers that were simple questions and should have been simple answers, but they weren’t.”

A spokesman for Mr. Sessions declined to comment on Wednesday.

The president added a new allegation against Mr. Comey, whose dismissal has become a central issue for critics who said it amounted to an attempt to obstruct the investigation into Russian meddling in the election and any possible collusion with Mr. Trump’s team.

Mr. Trump recalled that a little more than two weeks before his inauguration, Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials briefed him at Trump Tower on Russian meddling. Mr. Comey afterward pulled Mr. Trump aside and told him about a dossier that had been assembled by a former British spy filled with salacious allegations against the incoming president, including supposed sexual escapades in Moscow. The F.B.I. has not corroborated the most sensational assertions in the dossier.

In the interview, Mr. Trump said he believed Mr. Comey told him about the dossier to implicitly make clear he had something to hold over the president. “In my opinion, he shared it so that I would think he had it out there,” Mr. Trump said. As leverage? “Yeah, I think so,” Mr. Trump said. “In retrospect.”

The president dismissed the assertions in the dossier: “When he brought it to me, I said this is really made-up junk. I didn’t think about any of it. I just thought about, man, this is such a phony deal.”

Mr. Comey declined to comment on Wednesday.

But Mr. Comey and other intelligence officials decided it was best for him to raise the subject with Mr. Trump alone because he was going to remain as F.B.I. director. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that he disclosed the details of the dossier to Mr. Trump because he thought that the news media would soon be publishing details from it and that Mr. Trump had a right to know what information was out there about him. A two-page summary about the dossier was widely reported the week before Mr. Trump's inauguration, including by The Times.

Mr. Trump rebutted Mr. Comey's claim that in a one-on-one meeting in the Oval Office on Feb. 14, the president asked him to end the investigation into his former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn. Mr. Comey testified before Congress that Mr. Trump kicked the vice president, attorney general and several other senior administration officials out of the room before having the discussion with Mr. Comey.

"I don't remember even talking to him about any of this stuff," Mr. Trump said. "He said I asked people to go. Look, you look at his testimony. His testimony is loaded up with lies, O.K.?"

He expressed no second thoughts about firing Mr. Comey, saying, "I did a great thing for the American people."

Mr. Trump was also critical of Mr. Mueller, a former F.B.I. director, reprising some of his past complaints that lawyers in his office contributed money to Mrs. Clinton's campaign. He noted that he actually interviewed Mr. Mueller to replace Mr. Comey just before his appointment as special counsel.

"He was up here and he wanted the job," Mr. Trump said. After he was named special counsel, "I said, 'What the hell is this all about?' Talk about conflicts. But he was interviewing for the job. There were many other conflicts that I haven't said, but I will at some point."

The president also expressed discontent with Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, a former federal prosecutor from Baltimore. When Mr. Sessions recused himself, the president said he was irritated to learn where his deputy was from. "There are very few Republicans in Baltimore, if any," he said of the predominantly Democratic city.

He complained that Mr. Rosenstein had in effect been on both sides when it came to Mr. Comey. The deputy attorney general recommended Mr. Comey be fired but then appointed Mr. Mueller, who may be investigating whether the dismissal was an obstruction of justice. "Well, that's a conflict of interest," Mr. Trump said. "Do you know how many conflicts of interests there are?"

In an interview with Fox News before Mr. Trump's comments were published, Mr. Rosenstein said he was confident Mr. Mueller could avoid any conflict of interests. "We have a process with the department to take care of that," he said.

As for Andrew G. McCabe, the acting F.B.I. director, the president suggested that he, too, had a conflict. Mr. McCabe's wife, Jill McCabe, received nearly \$500,000 in 2015 during a losing campaign for the Virginia Senate from a political action committee affiliated with Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who is close friends with Hillary and Bill Clinton.

In his first description of his dinnertime conversation with Mr. Putin at the Group of 20 summit meeting in Hamburg, Germany, Mr. Trump played down its significance. He said his wife, Melania, was seated next to Mr. Putin at the other end of a table filled with world leaders.

"The meal was going toward dessert," he said. "I went down just to say hello to Melania, and while I was there I said hello to Putin. Really, pleasantries more than anything else. It was not a long conversation, but it was, you know, could be 15 minutes. Just talked about things. Actually, it was very interesting, we talked about adoption."

He noted the adoption issue came up in the June 2016 meeting between his son and Russian visitors. "I actually talked about Russian adoption with him," he said, meaning Mr. Putin. "Which is interesting because it was a part of the conversation that Don had in that meeting."

But the president repeated that he did not know about his son's meeting at the time and added that he did not need the Russians to provide damaging information about Mrs. Clinton.

"There wasn't much I could say about Hillary Clinton that was worse than what I was already saying," he said. "Unless somebody said that she shot somebody in the back, there wasn't much I could add to my repertoire."

The Associated Press

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/3d281c11a96b4ad082fe88aa0db04305/Article_2017-07-19-US--Trump-Russia%20Probe/id-82fa9ba865cd468997cc6f7c6cbba709

Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 7/19/17, 7:05 PM

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election.

Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday.

Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

"As Mr. Kushner has been saying since March, he has been and is prepared to voluntarily cooperate and provide whatever information he has on the investigations to Congress," said attorney Abbe Lowell. "He will continue to cooperate and appreciates the opportunity to assist in putting this matter to rest."

That meeting will apparently take place behind closed doors.

Alan Futerfas, a lawyer for Trump Jr., did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment about his scheduled testimony. Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said Manafort received the request Wednesday afternoon and is reading it over.

The three men will almost certainly be asked about their attendance at a June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer. That gathering was arranged via emails that advertised it would reveal damaging information about Hillary Clinton.

The lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, also said Wednesday she was ready to testify before the U.S. Senate and "clarify the situation."

The meeting raised new questions about the Trump campaign's possible ties to Moscow, which are being scrutinized by federal and congressional investigators. These questions have only intensified as the identities of other Russia-connected participants have become known.

"I am ready to clarify the situation behind the mass hysteria, but only through lawyers or testifying in the Senate," Veselnitskaya said in an interview broadcast Wednesday on Kremlin-funded RT television.

"If the Senate wishes to hear the real story, I will be happy to speak up and share everything I wanted to tell Mr. Trump," she added. That appeared to be a reference to Veselnitskaya's previous statement that the meeting with Trump Jr. focused on U.S.-Russian adoption policies and a U.S. sanctions law.

Veselnitskaya has denied working for the Russian government. She has not responded to repeated attempts by The Associated Press to reach her for comment.

Congressional investigators in both parties have said they want to hear from those involved in the meeting. The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, Virginia's Mark Warner, said

Wednesday afternoon that the panel hasn't yet invited Veselnitskaya to testify, but he wants to hear from her and others who attended.

Warner said "it's still being worked out" whether some of his committee's more high-profile witnesses, including Trump Jr. and Manafort, should testify publicly or privately. The Senate and House intelligence panels conduct most of their interviews in private, but occasionally hold open hearings.

Warner said Trump Jr. has "no security clearances that I am aware of, so he should be able to testify in public."

The GOP chairman of Senate Judiciary panel, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, told Iowa reporters Wednesday that he's been talking to Trump Jr.'s lawyer and "didn't get any pushback" when suggesting he testify this week. But he said "it's kind of rushy" to call him in so quickly, and said Democrats had requested documents and emails that they wanted to see before a hearing.

Grassley had said he would subpoena the witnesses if necessary.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing will review a law that oversees the registration of foreign agents. The panel has been investigating one of the participants at the Trump Jr. meeting, Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer Rinat Akhmetshin, as part of its probe into the law.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary panel, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, said this week that special counsel Robert Mueller has cleared Trump Jr. and Manafort for public testimony. Mueller is conducting the Justice Department's investigation and Grassley has said he wants to avoid conflicts.

The House Intelligence Committee is also probing the Russian meddling, and the top Democrat on that panel, California Rep. Adam Schiff, says the committee is contacting participants in the Trump Jr. meeting. Referencing Feinstein's comments about Mueller's clearance, he said his committee may consider public hearings "for particular witnesses" but noted it rarely holds open

hearings.

The House panel is "reaching out to participants in the meeting with a request for testimony and documents, so that is very much in process at the moment," Schiff said.

James Hewitt

Environmental Protection Agency

Special Advisor for Public Affairs

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Thur 3/22/2018 6:14:04 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence: Bahrain hires Miller & Chevalier to lobby on tariffs — 'Mad scramble' predicted to lobby on China tariffs

By Theodoric Meyer and Marianne LeVine | 03/22/2018 02:11 PM EDT

With David Beavers, Garrett Ross and Daniel Lippman

BAHRAIN HIRES MILLER & CHEVALIER TO LOBBY ON STEEL, ALUMINUM TARIFFS: Here's an intriguing foreign lobbying filing: The government of Bahrain hired **Miller & Chevalier** last week to lobby on President **Donald Trump's** steel and aluminum tariffs. Three Miller & Chevalier lawyers - **Homer Moyer, Richard Mojica** and **Welles Orr** - will "provide legal advice and assistance" with the tariffs, according to a Justice Department filing. It's a short-term contract that ends on March 31. "For work done during this period, Miller & Chevalier's fees will not exceed \$110,000," the contract states.

- Bahrain, an island nation off the coast of Saudi Arabia, may not come to mind as an industrial powerhouse. But Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, its Persian Gulf neighbor, are both major aluminum producers, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The Emirates are expected to fight for exemption from the tariffs, too. "Everybody is going to be calling in their chits and trying to make their points about why their exemptions make sense, but not everyone will be successful," **Danny E. Sebright**, the president of the **U.S.-U.A.E. Business Council**, told **The New York Times** last week.

MORE TARIFF LOBBYING: The Trump administration's new tariffs on China are spurring another lobbying effort by companies and trade groups to limit their effect on their industries. Senior White House officials say the tariffs are likely to affect "a proposed list of 1,300 products as punishment for Beijing's intellectual property practices," **POLITICO's Adam Behsudi** reports.

- **Warren Maruyama**, a partner at **Hogan Lovells** and a former general counsel in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative under former President **George W. Bush**, told PI that "there's going to be a mad scramble by a lot of companies to try to get products off the list, particularly if it's going to do real damage to supply chains or sourcing," he said. But don't expect China to lobby on the tariffs. "Even if they did lobby, it probably wouldn't do them any good," Maruyama said. "What they are probably going to do is hit back, which is what they've always done after U.S. trade actions."

- The **National Retail Federation** helped put together a coalition of industry groups last week to protest against the tariffs, and retailers and trade associations have weighed in with letters to the White House. "This trade tax has the potential to wipe out any gains the average American family received from tax reform," **Hun Quach**, the **Retail Industry Leaders Association's** vice president for international trade, said in a statement today. But it's unclear whether the administration will listen.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. We live for your tips: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

MAYBE NEXT TIME: While the omnibus includes "language designed to fix the so-called grain glitch" and beefs up "a tax subsidy for affordable housing," companies and trade groups hoping that further technical corrections to the GOP tax law would be included wound up disappointed. Left out of the bill: "bids to address other snafus in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act; a plan to address online sales taxes before the Supreme Court has a chance to weigh in on the matter; and a variety of retirement provisions backed by Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch," **POLITICO's Brian Faler** reports. But there's always next time. "Lawmakers may get another opportunity later this year to revive those and other proposals, thanks to a temporary reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration running through September that was also wrapped into the measure." Full story.

HOW DRUG LOBBYISTS WON THE BIOSIMILAR BATTLE: "The Trump administration has issued a policy change that could drive up prices of certain biologic drugs, implementing a new industry-backed measure that overturns existing regulation that promoted lower prices," **The Wall Street Journal's Joseph Walker** reports. "The move came after months of intense lobbying last year by pharmaceutical companies to overturn an Obama administration policy, introduced in 2015, that rewarded doctors with larger profits if they used the lowest-priced biosimilars, which are generic-like copies of brand-name biologic drugs. ... After Mr. Trump's election last fall, the [pharmaceutical] industry began an intense lobbying effort to have the Department of Health and Human Services change the payment rule, according to federal lobbying reports and congressional aides."

- "The Journal's analysis of those reports shows 16 drugmakers, industry trade groups and nonprofits lobbied Congress or federal agencies about biosimilar reimbursement in 2017. In April 2017, lobbyists from **Amgen Inc.**, **Pfizer** and other companies met with officials from HHS and [the Office of Management and Budget] to discuss the policy, according to OMB filings. At the meeting, drugmakers distributed an 18-page handout stating that biosimilar makers 'may leave the marketplace entirely' if the payment rule wasn't changed, according to the filing." Full story.

FLYING IN: While at least one trade group canceled its fly-in this week due to the storm, others managed to make it despite the weather. (Whether they'll be able to fly out on time is another question.) The **U.S. Travel Association** is in town to press lawmakers on infrastructure and ways to increase international tourism, among other issues. They're meeting with Sens. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), and Reps. Billy Long (R-Mo.), Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), Bill Johnson (R-Ohio) and Warren Davidson (R-Ohio).

- The **American Cable Association** is in town and heard from Commerce Secretary **Wilbur Ross** on Wednesday. And leaders of historically black colleges and universities came to Washington for a fly-in with representatives of tech companies such as **Intel**, **Microsoft**, **Google** and **Lyft**. They met with Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Doug Jones (D-Ala.) and Tim Scott (R-S.C.), and Reps. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Frank Pallone (D-

N.J.), Al Lawson (D-Fla.) and Ro Khanna (D-Calif.).

HOW THE TECH LOBBY LOST THE FIGHT AGAINST A SEX-TRAFFICKING BILL:

POLITICO's Steven Overly and **Ashley Gold** have the inside story on how the tech lobby lost its fight against a sex-trafficking bill. "Not only would the companies fail to convince the lawmakers to halt their plans, the legislation they opposed has now overwhelmingly passed both the House and Senate, and is on its way to the White House where President Donald Trump is expected to sign it." "Tech companies have to understand that it's not the Wild West, and they have to exercise responsibility," said Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. Full story.

IF YOU THOUGHT THERE WAS A TRADE GROUP FOR EVERYTHING ALREADY:

Apparently there's room for one more trade group in Washington. **Jonathan Linkous**, the former chief executive of the **American Telemedicine Association**, "has co-founded a new trade group dedicated to artificial intelligence and automation in health care," called the **Partnership for Artificial Intelligence and Automation in Healthcare**, **POLITICO's Mohana Ravindranath** reports. "Members will include health systems, industry, payers, regulators and individual professionals." Full story.

JOBS REPORT

- Two former White House aides will join **Reince Priebus** at **Michael Best & Friedrich's** Washington office. **Michael Ambrosini**, who will be a principal with **Michael Best Strategies**, previously worked for **Data Trust** and before that worked as the director of Priebus' office when he was White House chief of staff. **Katie Hrkman** will be director of operations and was previously the deputy director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Both worked with Priebus at the **Republican National Committee** before joining him in the White House.

- **Michael Amato** and **Chris Beatty** have joined **CLS Strategies** as managing directors, working in the public affairs, crisis and international communications practices. Amato was previously communications director at the Office of Personnel Management. Beatty previously worked at **KRL International**.

- **Laura Hylden Henry** has joined the **National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association** as the PAC and political director. She was previously the PAC administrator for the **American College of Radiology's** PAC.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

Winning Women Restoring America (Reps. Martha McSally, Liz Cheney, Barbara Comstock and Martha Roby)

NEW PACs:

None

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

None

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Bob Riley & Associates LLC: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama

Loper Consulting LLC: Teva Pharmaceuticals USA

Porter Group LLC: Maverick Helicopters

Shumaker Advisors Florida LLC: Regenerative Processing Plant LLC

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2018/03/22/bahrain-hires-miller-chevalier-to-lobby-on-tariffs-147748>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Thur 11/2/2017 12:42:21 AM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Hi, I don't think my question was especially difficult: given that Admin. Pruitt has explicitly said he would like to lighten regulatory burden, can you please quantify how he has done so?

I'd also asked about how many Regional hqs he has visited. No answer to that, either.

I'm sure you're all very busy, but he is a public official, running a public agency. I believe the people deserve answers.

Thank you.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 12:57 PM Alexander Nazaryan <alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed

through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. 'Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,' said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." (NTK Network, Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of**
Alexander Nazaryan

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

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To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Mon 3/12/2018 7:57:11 PM
Subject: News Clips - 12 March 2018

(Full stories, highlights, and details are listed further down in the email, and can be jumped to by clicking on any of the links below.)

Administrator Pruitt's Roundtable

[St. Louis Post-Dispatch - EPA head says final West Lake cleanup plan could mean more aggressive removal of material](#)

[Politico - Report: Pruitt backs E15 waiver, curbing trade of credits](#)

[The Hill - Pruitt may limit ethanol market traders](#)

[Houston Chronicle - Pruitt looks to stamp out RIN "hoarding," raises possibility of limits on Wall Street](#)

Climate Science Debate

[New York Times - The E.P.A. Chief Wanted a Climate Science Debate. Trump's Chief of Staff Stopped Him.](#)

[Daily Caller - John Kelly Killed Pruitt's Plan To Publicly Debate Climate Science](#)

The Hill - John Kelly killed Pruitt's climate science debate

Mother Jones - EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Wanted A Live TV Debate Questioning Climate Change

General

E&E Climatewire - Pruitt's youth advisers slam federal inaction on climate

AP - EPA hires GOP media firm to produce report praising Pruitt

The Hill - EPA hired right-leaning media firm to compile its 'year in review'

The Hill - EPA science advisers haven't met in six months: report

The Hill - Administration asks court to dismiss lawsuit from EPA scientists

E&E Greenwire - City leaders press Pruitt aides on climate, staffing

The Hill - Cabinet officials rebuked by White House amid ethics questions: report

CNN - White House scolds Cabinet officials after embarrassing ethics reports

Politico - Judge orders EPA to issue ozone designations quickly

E&E News PM - EPA faces growing calls to replace lead pipes

E&E Greenwire - Pruitt ag adviser leaves

AP - 2 ex-US environmental chiefs blast truck emissions loophole

The Hill - Ex-EPA heads urge Pruitt to scrap changes to truck pollution rule

Politico - Democrats urge Pruitt to drop glider rule repeal

E&E Greenwire - Agency punches back in science advisers lawsuit

E&E Daily - Committee takes up 'good Samaritan' cleanups

BNA - Companies' Chemical Secrets Run Up Against the New Toxics Law

E&E Greenwire - Judges side with 9/11 whistleblower fired for death threats

E&E Greenwire - Judges weigh FOIA requests on alleged scientific misconduct

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/epa-head-says-final-west-lake-cleanup-plan-could-mean/article_2de47bd9-7b39-5408-ae1b-ecba527d5651.html

EPA head says final West Lake cleanup plan could mean more aggressive removal of material

By Chuck Raasch, 3/12/18

WASHINGTON • Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Monday that he believes he's proposed a "sound, solid" solution to clean up the West Lake Landfill Superfund site - but a final decision could include excavating more than the 67 percent of the site the EPA says will be sufficient to protect the health of neighboring residents.

"What is really exciting about St. Louis is at this point in five years the uranium will be removed," Pruitt said, in reference to the radioactive material left over from World War II's atomic bomb creation. "Which I think is amazing in light of taking 28 years to just make a decision."

In a briefing with five reporters, Pruitt touted his first year as administrator, arguing that his agency has sped up dormant decision-making on issues like West Lake, and that it has contributed to billions of dollars in savings to companies from regulatory relief.

He said the EPA would have a final rule on re-doing the controversial "Waters of the United

States” initiative of former President Barack Obama, which environmentalists heralded as a boon for water quality. Critics, including many Missouri Republicans, attacked it as government overreach.

Pruitt’s stormy first year on the job was marked in part by his decision on West Lake. He called it a “poster-child” of previous administrations’ inability to clean up the 1,340 Superfund sites he said he inherited.

EPA officials, including Pruitt’s top Super Fund adviser, attended a community meeting in Bridgeton last week in which many speakers advocated a more extensive cleanup than Pruitt proposed in his Feb. 1 announcement. Many advocated for “Alternative 7,” which would cost an estimated \$455 million and be shared by public and private entities considered liable for the cleanup. The current proposal would cost about \$236 million.

EPA is currently taking comments on its proposal.

Pruitt said an “extraction vs. cap” remedy debate is too simplistic.

“As I challenge my team I ask them, ‘what do we need to do to ensure protection of health,’ ” Pruitt said. “And that is the reason that we came to the conclusion that we are getting after the radioactive material that I have been told poses a risk to health.

“As you know it approaches 70 percent (removal) with the current proposal, and I think through this comment period it might actually increase,” Pruitt told the Post-Dispatch. “But the charge was (to) get all the radioactive material that poses a risk to health, and I have been told and assured that that is taking place. That is the most important.

Asked whether the comment period could drive the EPA to adopt “Alternative 7,” Pruitt said: “I don’t want to prejudge it. It is not wise to do that. What is wise is to take comments and evaluate, I think. The proposal is a sound proposal.”

Pruitt said when he took office he found a lack of urgency for getting things done and having accountability.

His first year also has been marked by controversy over everything ranging from his public doubts about climate change to his expensive travel tastes.

On his office wall is a framed copy of a note that Pruitt sent to President Donald Trump praising Trump for pulling the United States from the Paris Climate accord, a decision that upset environmentalists and caused allies abroad to doubt U.S. commitment to confront global environmental issues. Trump signed it and sent it back.

Pruitt has also been entangled in the Renewable Fuel Standards debate, which has pitted corn farmers against oil refiners.

Trump delayed enactment of the "Waters of the United States" to 2020 while EPA reviews the policy.

Former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy had pushed it as vital for health and water quality protection; critics said it put unnecessary regulatory crimps on farmers and others.

Pruitt also said he is pushing for the Trump administration to have a goal of eliminating lead from drinking water in 10 years, a water-infrastructure program that could cost over \$40 billion.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/agriculture/whiteboard/2018/03/report-pruitt-backs-e15-waiver-curbing-trade-of-credits-783400>

Report: Pruitt backs E15 waiver, curbing trade of credits

By Eric Wolff, 3/12/18, 2:08 PM

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt says he would sign a waiver allowing blends of 15 percent ethanol gasoline if he can do so legally, the Houston Chronicle reported today.

"I told the folks in Iowa, if the law allows me to do it I'll sign it tomorrow," he told a group of reporters. "It doesn't make sense to only be able to sell nine months out of the year."

Pruitt said last year he would ask staff to investigate whether EPA had the authority to issue a waiver under the Clean Air Act to allow year-round sale of E15 in all states. Some refining interests have proposed having EPA grant the waiver in exchange for a price cap on the cost of biofuel credits.

Pruitt also said he was considering limiting who can trade those credits. The idea, which would be aimed at boxing out investment banks from the program, has backing from some ethanol producers and oil refiners, a rare point of agreement in the contentious program.

"There's some things on the trading platform I think should happen no matter what," he said, according to the newspaper. "There seems to be a hoarding of [Renewable Identification Numbers], which inflates the price of RINs. Some have talked about limiting the participants who buy and sell, so you can get away from some of the speculation that's taking place."

WHAT'S NEXT: Oil refiners, biofuel producers, the White House and several senators are trying to hammer out a compromise agreement to alter the RFS.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/377960-pruitt-may-limit-ethanol-market-traders>

Pruitt may limit ethanol market traders

By Timothy Cama, 3/12/18, 1:56 PM

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt is considering taking action to limit what he sees as speculative trade of ethanol credits in an effort to keep prices down.

Pruitt told reporters that one idea is to limit who can trade the credits that some refiners have to buy to comply with the federal ethanol mandate.

“There’s some things on the trading platform I think should happen no matter what,” Pruitt told reporters at EPA headquarters Monday, according to the Houston Chronicle.

“There seems to be a hoarding of [Renewable Identification Numbers], which inflates the price of RINs. Some have talked about limiting the participants who buy and sell, so you can get away from some of the speculation that’s taking place.”

The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), enacted by Congress in 2007, requires refiners to blend certain volumes of ethanol and other biofuels into their traditional fossil fuels.

Refiners who cannot blend biofuels have to purchase credits from others. But those credits can be traded on a market that some refiners have complained is too speculative, in which prices fluctuate greatly.

Reforming the credit program has been a top request of refiners and their allies in recent months, particularly after a major Philadelphia refiner declared bankruptcy in January, blaming RIN costs.

President Trump has told Republican senators that he would be open to reforms that lawmakers from the various sides of the issue would support.

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) has proposed capping the price of the credits, but lawmakers from corn states have opposed that approach.

Pruitt also told reporters that he supports letting fuel stations sell higher ethanol blends in the summer than they are currently allowed to, but only if such a change can withstand legal challenges, according to the Chronicle.

Houston Chronicle

<https://www.chron.com/business/energy/article/Pruitt-discusses-limiting-RIN-trading-to-prevent-12746733.php>

Pruitt looks to stamp out RIN "hoarding," raises possibility of limits on Wall Street

By James Osborne, 3/12/18, 1:08 PM

WASHINGTON - EPA chief Scott Pruitt raised the idea Monday of limiting Wall Street's ability to trade the government-issued credits for ethanol and other biofuels in an effort to aid oil refineries.

Under federal law, refiners must blend their gasoline with up to 10 percent ethanol. Refiners that

don't blend ethanol themselves must buy the credits from companies that do. But these refining companies claim that the market for credits is opaque, thinly traded and subject to manipulation by speculators that can send price skyrocketing.

In a meeting with reporters at the Environmental Protection Agency's headquarters in Washington, Pruitt seemed to suggest that removing speculators from the market would help keep costs lower.

"There's some things on the trading platform I think should happen no matter what," he said. "There seems to be a hoarding of [Renewable Identification Numbers], which inflates the price of RINs. Some have talked about limiting the participants who buy and sell, so you can get away from some of the speculation that's taking place."

The Trump administration is trying to broker a deal between oil state Republicans like Sen. Ted Cruz, of Texas and corn state Republicans like Sen. Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, who have been at odds for months over the the future of the federal mandate requiring ethanol be blended into the nation's fuel supply.

In addition to limiting RIN trading, Pruitt also brought up the possibility of lifting an air pollution regulation that prevents the sale of fuels with higher concentrations of ethanol during the summertime.

"I told the folks in Iowa, if the law allows me to do it I'll sign it tomorrow. It doesn't make sense to only be able to sell nine months out of the year."

Pruitt's seemingly off-the-cuff comments Monday drew applause from ethanol producers, which by virtue of their large demand for the region's corn supply carry considerable political weight.

"We are encouraged by the Administrator's comments," said Bob Dinneen, president of the Renewable Fuels Association. "We would be receptive to any proposals bringing more transparency and liquidity to the RIN market."

Cruz has asked the Trump administration place a cap on the price of RIN credits, to help refineries the senator argues are at financial risk from compliance costs that can run hundreds of millions of dollars a year. That proposal has drawn fire from Grassley and other Midwestern politicians who argue Cruz is trying to decimate ethanol demand by reducing financial incentives for refineries to comply with the federal mandate.

Pruitt didn't discuss the cap proposal during Monday's meeting but rather focused the need to find a solution that would help refineries while also giving ethanol producers a boost.

"These market challenges we have are real," he said. "The President has a commitment to the [biofuels mandate] and ranching and farming communities in this country. But he doesn't want refineries to shut down either."

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/climate/pruitt-red-team-climate-debate-kelly.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FEnvironmental%20Protection%20Agency>

The E.P.A. Chief Wanted a Climate Science Debate. Trump's Chief of Staff Stopped Him.

By Lisa Friedman and Julie Hirschfeld Davis, 3/9/18

John F. Kelly, the White House chief of staff, has killed an effort by the head of the Environmental Protection Agency to stage public debates challenging climate change science, according to three people familiar with the deliberations, thwarting a plan that had intrigued President Trump even as it set off alarm bells among his top advisers.

The idea of publicly critiquing climate change on the national stage has been a notable theme for

Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the E.P.A. For nearly a year he has championed the notion of holding military-style exercises known as red team, blue team debates, possibly to be broadcast live, to question the validity of climate change.

Mr. Pruitt has spoken personally with Mr. Trump about the idea, and the president expressed enthusiasm for it, according to people familiar with the conversations.

But the plan encountered widespread resistance within the administration from Mr. Kelly and other top officials, who regarded it as ill-conceived and politically risky, and when Mr. Pruitt sought to announce it last fall, they weighed in to stop him. At a mid-December meeting set up by Mr. Kelly's deputy, Rick Dearborn, to discuss the plan, Mr. Dearborn made it clear that his boss considered the idea "dead," and not to be discussed further, according to people familiar with the meeting. All spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to describe internal White House deliberations and meetings.

During that meeting, according to two attendees and a third person briefed on the discussion, administration officials and White House aides were in agreement that Mr. Pruitt's idea was unwise. Their main concern was that a public debate on science — particularly on an issue as politically charged as the warming of the planet — could become a damaging spectacle, creating an unnecessary distraction from the steps the administration has taken to slash environmental regulations enacted by former President Barack Obama.

Asked about the meeting and the administration's internal deliberations, Raj Shah, the deputy press secretary, said: "The Trump Administration will ensure that any climate science review will be conducted through a robust, interagency process, consistent with federal law."

The E.P.A. did not respond to requests for comment.

The episode reflects some of the challenges that Mr. Kelly faces in bringing order to a chaotic White House, where policy deliberations are sometimes circumvented when people close to Mr. Trump approach him personally to seek his approval for unorthodox moves.

Mr. Kelly is a retired four-star Marine Corps general who is said to share the pragmatic view held by military leaders including Jim Mattis, the secretary of defense, that climate change is happening and poses a serious national security challenge. Since he became chief of staff last July, Mr. Kelly has toiled to control access to Mr. Trump to try to ensure that his actions are informed by an orderly process in the West Wing — a pursuit that flies in the face of the president's freewheeling style.

The tension between the White House and the E.P.A. over the red team, blue team idea reflects a broader rift within the administration over whether and how directly to attack climate change science itself. While the words "climate change" have been removed from many federal websites, and Mr. Trump has mocked global warming in tweets, the administration has stopped short of using the power of the federal government to attack the science.

Holding national debates on climate change could have serious policy implications.

The fundamental science, that man-made pollution is overwhelmingly responsible for warming temperatures and rising sea levels, is widely accepted among mainstream scientists. That science formed the basis of a key 2009 E.P.A. decision known as the endangerment finding, which declares that climate change is a threat to human health and welfare. That finding is the legal backbone for almost all federal climate policy and requires the government to regulate greenhouse gas emissions in some manner. A government critique of climate science could lay the groundwork for challenging the endangerment finding in court.

Climate denialist groups like the Heartland Institute have urged Mr. Pruitt to challenge the finding, while industry associations have expressed little interest in doing so. Tim Doyle, vice president of policy for the conservative business organization American Council for Capital Formation, said the companies he works with have not expressed any interest in a public forum to challenge climate change science.

"We definitely haven't heard any of our members supporting the red team, blue team concept," he said. "There's been, if anything, radio silence about it."

The idea for red team, blue team climate debates originated with Steven Koonin, a physicist at New York University who was an energy undersecretary under Mr. Obama. Mr. Koonin in April

wrote an op-ed in The Wall Street Journal calling for using the military-style exercise — in which one team attacks and another defends — to test the robustness of climate change science. One week later, he paid a visit to the E.P.A. at Mr. Pruitt's invitation to discuss the idea further.

Mr. Koonin, in an interview, said he has “no dog in this fight” — meaning that he is willing to be persuaded that climate change is an urgent threat — but that he believes there are uncertainties in the science that are worth exploring.

In talking with federal officials, Mr. Koonin said he outlined a vision for a debate including not only the E.P.A. but also the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, both of which collect data and conduct studies on Arctic ice melt, global temperature modeling and other issues. The White House science adviser should coordinate any such exercise, he said, to ensure all relevant government offices participate.

“It would need to be governmentwide, certainly multiagency, in order for it to be robust and taken seriously as a scientific endeavor,” Mr. Koonin said.

Climate scientists and others who oppose the debate idea note that the studies that make up the body of knowledge on climate change already are subject to rigorous peer review. They contend that the red team, blue team exercise would be a politically motivated way to inject doubt into findings that have already been scientifically established.

“The idea of a red team approach is used to test how well forces, or strategy, will perform against an adversary. But climate science is not our adversary,” said Sherri Goodman, a former deputy undersecretary of defense under President Bill Clinton and now a senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center.

Mr. Pruitt planned to announce his red team, blue team debate in early November, according to a news release that was written but never issued. According to four people who have read the draft news release, the debates were to be organized by the E.P.A.'s science advisory board and not include other agencies.

The announcement of the debates would have coincided with the release of an exhaustive scientific report from 13 United States government agencies that definitively found human activity to be responsible for almost all of the warming that has occurred in the past half-century. It would have also coincided with the start of a United Nations meeting in Germany to discuss the Paris agreement, the global climate accord from which Mr. Trump intends to withdraw the United States' participation.

When Mr. Trump's chief of staff learned about the news release, he demanded the debates be delayed until cabinet secretaries and top White House officials could discuss it, according to three people familiar with the discussions. That initial meeting never occurred, but on Dec. 13, the White House convened senior officials to discuss the matter.

According to two people who attended, the meeting included a presentation of the red team, blue team plan by two E.P.A. officials — Mr. Pruitt's chief of staff and the head of the agency's air office. Other attendees included senior officials from the Department of Energy, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the National Economic Council.

The meeting was run by Mr. Dearborn and Michael Catanzaro, who is a member of the economic council and the president's domestic energy and environment policy director.

The takeaway, according to people in the room, was that every office within the White House was opposed to the idea. At one point, Mr. Dearborn said the notion of red team, blue team debates was "dead" and should not be mentioned again. "The chief doesn't want it," Mr. Dearborn said, referring to the White House chief of staff, according to one person who attended.

E.P.A. officials were taken aback, the person said.

In the weeks since that meeting, however, Mr. Pruitt said the red team, blue team debates were still under consideration. In January, he told Congress that a report in E & E News, a news organization focusing on energy and the environment that first reported that the White House had killed the plan, was false. White House opposition to the debates was "untrue," he said under questioning by a senator.

For the moment, even those who have championed the red team, blue team idea like Mr. Koonin are doubtful the debates will happen. “My optimism that we can get this done in a quality way is pretty low at this point,” Mr. Koonin said. “It needs to be a governmentwide exercise and there’s nobody that I know of that has picked up the ball in the White House.”

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/03/09/john-kelly-killed-pruitts-plan/>

John Kelly Killed Pruitt’s Plan To Publicly Debate Climate Science

By Chris White, 3/9/18, 5:18 PM

President Donald Trump’s chief of staff killed EPA chief Scott Pruitt’s idea to publicly debate the merits and demerits of man-made global warming, according to a report Friday from The New York Times.

John Kelly, a retired four-star Marine Corps general, put a screeching halt to Pruitt’s goal to craft a red team and blue team to challenge climate change science, three people familiar with the deliberations told TheNYT. Trump has expressed interest in the idea.

Pruitt, who famously sued the agency more than a dozen times as Oklahoma’s attorney general, spent more than a year championing the notion of holding military-style exercises to question the validity of climate change. He even floated the idea of televising the debates, all in an effort to bring transparency to the science.

Military and intelligence agencies use a similar debate tactic to expose vulnerabilities to strategic

systems. The tactic would give needed balance to climate science, a field of research many believe has been monopolized by activists, skeptics say. Some in the administration were enthusiastic supporters, however, Kelly and others were skeptical about the proposal.

White House officials were in agreement that Pruitt's idea was unwise, according to sources who attended a meeting discussing the proposal. Their main objection was that a public debate on the hot-button issue of climate science could create an unnecessary distraction as Trump seeks to pullback elements of former President Barack Obama's environmental legacy.

Some inside the administration worried the debate would muddy the waters of Pruitt's de-regulatory mission. The Environmental Protection Agency finalized 22 deregulatory actions in 2017, which could save \$1 billion in regulatory costs. The agency is working on another 44 deregulatory actions, including the repeal of the Clean Power Plan and Clean Water Rule.

Elements within the Obama administration even promoted the idea. Steve Koonin, a former Energy Department head during Obama's tenure, for instance, suggested a red team-blue team approach in an April editorial to put the issue to rest. He was a rarity in the Obama administration.

Koonin has "no dog in this fight," he told TheNYT in an interview, meaning there are uncertainties in the science that are worth exploring, but he can still be convinced that climate change is a unique threat deserving of immediate action.

The EPA has not responded to The Daily Caller News Foundation's request for comment about the validity of TheNYT's report.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/377658-john-kelly-killed-pruitts-climate-science-debate>

John Kelly killed Pruitt's climate science debate

By Timothy Cama, 3/9/18, 3:42 PM

White House chief of staff John Kelly killed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt's plan for a public debate on climate change science, according to a New York Times report Friday.

Pruitt for months has been talking publicly about organizing a government "red team, blue team" exercise among climate change experts and skeptics, possibly on television, and President Trump was receptive.

But at a December meeting that included representatives from the White House and the EPA, Rick Dearborn, Kelly's deputy, relayed that the concept is "dead" and Kelly would not allow the idea to take flight, the Times reported, citing three people familiar with the meeting.

Administration officials were worried that the exercise would be too politically risky and draw negative attention to Trump's aggressive mission to undo the Obama administration's climate policies.

White House deputy press secretary Raj Shah told the Times that the administration "will ensure that any climate science review will be conducted through a robust, interagency process, consistent with federal law," while the EPA did not respond to a request for comment.

The idea came from Steven Koonin, a New York University physicist and former Energy Department official during the Obama administration.

"The American people deserve an honest, open, transparent discussion," about climate science, Pruitt said last year. "What do we know? What don't we know? Does it pose an existential threat,

what can be done about it?”

Pruitt has said that the climate is changing and humans have played some role. But he has questioned whether humans are the dominant cause or whether global warming would be harmful to humans, two questions that scientists widely answer in the affirmative.

E&E News reported after the December meeting that officials had put the debate idea on hold.

But when lawmakers asked Pruitt about that report later, he said it was “untrue,” and that he was still planning the exercise.

Mother Jones

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/03/scott-pruitt-john-kelly-climate-change-debates/>

EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Wanted A Live TV Debate Questioning Climate Change

By Andy Kroll, 3/10/18, 2:48 PM

Scott Pruitt, the polluter-friendly chief of the Environmental Protection Agency, has already amassed a lengthy list of extreme, fringe accomplishments. As Rebecca Leber wrote in her recent Mother Jones cover story, Pruitt has set out to demolish one EPA policy after another during his first year on the job, driven by his religious beliefs and personal ambition.

But the New York Times reports that one of Pruitt’s most radical ideas—a series of “military-style” debates challenging the validity of the science of climate change—was too far-out even for the Trump White House. Pruitt, a climate denier, has been pushing for so-called red team-blue team debates that would present the issue as open to debate. (Never mind that the science is

settled: 97 percent of climate scientists agree that the planet's warming over the past century is very likely due to humans. "Scientific evidence for warming of the climate system is unequivocal," according to the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.)

The Times says that Pruitt mulled broadcasting his climate-change debates on live television and that he raised the idea with the ratings- and reality TV-obsessed president. Yet John Kelly, the White House chief of staff, wanted nothing to do with the debates:

But the plan encountered widespread resistance within the administration from Mr. Kelly and other top officials, who regarded it as ill-conceived and politically risky, and when Mr. Pruitt sought to announce it last fall, they weighed in to stop him. At a mid-December meeting set up by Mr. Kelly's deputy, Rick Dearborn, to discuss the plan, Mr. Dearborn made it clear that his boss considered the idea "dead," and not to be discussed further, according to people familiar with the meeting. All spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to describe internal White House deliberations and meetings.

Don't expect the EPA's deregulator-in-chief to be thwarted. It's pretty clear that Pruitt has his sights set on a larger stage—the Senate? The White House? But first he wants to undo as much as of the previous administration's work as he can, far from the glare of TV lights.

E&E Climatewire

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060075985/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt's youth advisers slam federal inaction on climate

By Niina Heikkinen, 3/12/18

U.S. EPA's youngest social justice advisers are hammering the federal government for its lack of

action on climate change.

In a draft report — prepared for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and other agency officials — a group of outside advisers calls on the Trump administration to take action on climate change and offers tips on how to engage young Americans on the issue.

"Despite the urgency of climate change, political will at the national level has lagged behind or been outright captured by the powerful interests opposed to bold and just solutions offered by young people, desperate to defend their future rights to a clean and healthy planet," wrote the Youth Perspectives on Climate Change Work Group.

The report is an uncommon example of an EPA-requested document talking about climate change in an administration peppered with officials who question mainstream climate science. EPA has cut mentions of the largely man-made driven phenomenon from its website and is in the process of unraveling regulations meant to control greenhouse gas emissions.

The draft is yet to be approved by EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), which helped establish the youth group in 2015 in order to find ways to include more young people's perspectives in addressing climate change. The 85-page document is the result of collaborative work of 15 youth representatives between the ages of 19 and 29. Its members — who come from academia, environmental groups and local government — are either currently working with local communities vulnerable to climate change or have done so in the past.

Samantha Shattuck, a public health specialist and the group's co-chair, noted that each of the report's authors was representing his or her own views and experiences in the report. She added that she was not able to comment on the report directly as it is still unpublished.

The group members are charged with two main tasks — providing recommendations for how EPA could "authentically engage" with youth between the ages of 14 to 29 to be more resilient to climate change and suggesting ways to develop youth-led projects to address health problems related to climate. The report's recommendations are based on the experiences of its members as well as a number of case studies drawn from the organizations the group's members are affiliated with.

Shattuck said the authors sought to provide guidance not only to EPA, but for how other federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations could incorporate youth voices on climate change and environmental justice more effectively.

"The longevity of these vulnerabilities demonstrates the importance of engaging youth, the individuals who will be the next leaders in government, academia, industry, and in nonprofits. Youth need the capacity and knowledge to more critically assess and address climate justice challenges in the future, and engaging them effectively will aid in the development of future thought leaders in this space to help with growing infrastructure, research, and policy issues," the report's authors concluded.

A number of the recommendations focus on increasing youth representation across the decisionmaking process at the agency level and offer suggestions on how EPA can support the development of the next generation of climate leaders by providing funding to outside organizations.

For example, the authors suggest that at least 20 percent of federal advisory bodies should be made up of youth affected by climate change. They also call for EPA to target funding toward organizations that provide youth with a living wage.

"In the environmental field in general, there is a lot of barriers to entry, not the least of which being unpaid work," said Shattuck. "So coming from a privileged position, a lot of students are able to take off and work unpaid, they may have their families supporting them. But communities who are coming from low-income backgrounds may not be able to take off unpaid work."

This disparity is especially problematic because youth from low-income backgrounds are those most likely to bear the brunt of climate change impacts and other pollution sources, she added.

The report encourages the federal government and other groups to seek input from young Americans who aren't necessarily the straight-A environmental science students, but may have a "visceral level" understanding of climate effects and may not have any previous leadership

experience.

"I think there's traditionally an idea that people of color don't care as much about the environment because they don't visit parks or national parks, but so much of it is about access and opportunity. Who is more likely to have paid vacation, who is more likely to live in places with a healthier environment, farther away from industry?" she said.

The report's authors received comments on the draft last week from NEJAC and expect to have the final report finalized and publicly available in May or June.

The draft report comes out the same week Pruitt announced the appointment of eight new members to NEJAC, which is overseeing the work group. The administrator also announced he was seeking nominations to fill four vacancies.

"I am proud to announce this distinguished group of new members to the NEJAC," Pruitt said in a statement last week.

"Their significant experience and expertise will be invaluable to the NEJAC as it provides advice and recommendations to help the Agency improve public health, protect the environment, and support economic growth for all people."

AP

<https://apnews.com/fc7f53cf670f49d384dbe8275a9ffb2c/EPA-hires-GOP-media-firm-to-produce-report-praising-Pruitt>

EPA hires GOP media firm to produce report praising Pruitt

By Michael Biesecker, 3/9/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency used public money to hire a private media firm with strong Republican ties to help produce a report promoting Administrator Scott Pruitt's first-year accomplishments.

Records show EPA paid \$6,500 last month Go Big Media Inc. for work related to "design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report." Go Big was founded by Republican political strategist Phillip Stutts and counts GOP candidates and conservative groups among its clients.

The 37-page report issued by the agency earlier this week references Pruitt by name 214 times. Of the two dozen photos included in the document, 20 include the administrator, a Republican who previously served that the elected attorney general of Oklahoma.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox defended the contract.

"We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house," Wilcox said.

It is at least the second time in the last year that EPA has hired a Republican-affiliated firm to assist its public affairs efforts.

In December, EPA pulled out of a \$120,000 no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs, a Virginia public relations firm founded by former Republican campaign operatives that specializes in opposition research on its clients' political opponents and corporate rivals. The New York Times reported that a senior vice president at the firm had filed at least 40 requests under the Freedom of Information Act, many of them seeking emails and other records from EPA employees who have spoken out against Pruitt's regulatory rollbacks.

Wilcox said the Go Big contract, which was first reported by E&E News, “pales in comparison” to the \$568,000 paid under the Obama administration to Strategies 360, a public relations firm co-founded by a former Democratic campaign manager.

In that case, the firm was hired by the Swinomish Indian Tribe, which received a portion of an EPA grant to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to help educate the public about clean water initiatives in Puget Sound. A subsequent review by EPA’s Inspector General concluded last year that the payment to Strategies 360 did not violate federal lobbying prohibitions.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/finance/377659-epa-hired-right-wing-media-firm-to-compile-its-year-in-review>

EPA hired right-leaning media firm to compile its 'year in review'

By Miranda Green, 3/9/18, 3:54 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency paid a media group that largely works with Republicans thousands of dollars to compile the agency's annual "year in review" report, according to public financial documents.

Go Big Media, a right-leaning digital consulting and advertising firm, was paid \$6,500 by the EPA in February to create the report, E&E News first reported. One of the company's previous clients include Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, when he ran for Congress in Montana.

The company's founder, Philip Stutts, also regularly appears as a commentator on Fox News, according to Go Big Media's website.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox confirmed the contract, highlighting that it was the cheapest option.

"We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house. This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager's PR firm to run EPA's What's Upstream campaign," Wilcox said in a statement.

The report, released Monday, touted the EPA's top achievements and highlighted, among other things, a The Hill article entitled: "EPA staffing falls to Regan-era levels."

Other accomplishments highlighted in the report included the agency's rescinding of the Waters of the United States rule and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's directive to remove scientists from sitting on advisory boards who receive agency grant funding.

"Administrator Pruitt's directive ensures that EPA's Federal Advisory Committees (FACs) provide a diverse and independent range of perspectives. Members serving on an EPA FAC shall not simultaneously receive grants from the agency," the report read.

In December, Mother Jones first reported that Pruitt paid a Republican opposition research firm \$120,000 to provide media monitoring. Days after the news broke, the EPA rescinded the no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs.

"How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor," Wilcox told The Hill at the time.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/377720-epa-science-advisers-havent-met-in-6-months>

EPA science advisers haven't met in six months: report

By Jacqueline Thomsen, 3/10/18, 9:05 AM

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) scientific advisory board (SAB) hasn't met in at least six months, Scientific American reported this week.

The magazine said the full EPA board last met in August, and has not held conference calls or votes since then. One board member said that in the past, the group would have met or been in contact several times.

The EPA said that the group hasn't met because of delayed paperwork, which stops the board from having enough members to reach a quorum.

However, one board member said that EPA head Scott Pruitt was slowing down the board until about a dozen members' terms end in September.

"He's running out the clock, because in the end of September, he gets another chunk of them off," the member told Scientific American. "The obvious interpretation is that he's making sure he doesn't use the SAB until he has appointed the overwhelming majority of the people on the SAB."

Peter Thorne, a professor at the University of Iowa College of Public Health and former chairman of the board, said the board would normally have at least one two-day meeting and a couple of teleconferences over the span of six months.

He added that EPA officials would also consult the board on the science behind new regulations.

"If there are reports or regulatory actions that are being scheduled or that are happening and they're not coming to the science advisory board, then something is most definitely lost, because the board provides very important input to the process and scientific rigor," Thorne told Scientific American.

Pruitt has taken steps to reshape the agency's advisory boards, blocking scientists who have received past EPA grants from sitting on the boards. The EPA said the move was to eliminate conflicts of interest, but critics have said it allows more industry advocates to work as EPA advisers.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/377921-trump-admin-wants-case-over-epa-science-advisers-dismissed>

Administration asks court to dismiss lawsuit from EPA scientists

By Timothy Cama, 3/12/18, 10:13 AM

Attorneys for the Trump administration are asking a court to dismiss a lawsuit challenging Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) head Scott Pruitt's new policy on science advisers.

Justice Department attorneys argued that Pruitt's policy preventing EPA grant recipients from serving on external advisory committees is well within government ethics rules and Pruitt's authority to pick his own advisers.

“Plaintiffs make the extraordinary claim that the EPA’s effort to ensure a diversity of viewpoints on advisory committees that provide advice and recommendations to the administrator somehow violates government-wide ethics rules. But the directive that plaintiffs challenge does no such thing,” the government wrote in a motion filed late Friday.

Lawyers further argued that the directive is not intended to change ethics rules, but is instead merely “a general statement of policy that describes the appointment philosophy EPA will apply regarding the federal advisory committees it administers.”

“Ultimately, the power to appoint committee members is the administrator’s alone and is non-reviewable by the courts under the circumstances presented here,” the attorneys said in asking for dismissal. “Plaintiffs’ challenge to these highly discretionary policy judgments and the EPA’s power to make them is unprecedented and should be rejected by the court.”

The case is being heard in the federal District Court for the District of Columbia by Judge Trevor McFadden, who was nominated last year by President Trump.

Pruitt rolled out the policy in October 2017, arguing that EPA grantees — generally academics with expertise in areas like public health and pollution — have significant conflicts of interests. He said the new policy for advisers would eliminate such conflicts.

“We want to ensure that there’s integrity in the process, and that the scientists who are advising us are doing so with not any type of appearance of conflict,” Pruitt said at the time. “And when you receive that much money ... there’s a question that arises about independence.”

Pruitt estimated that in the last three years, grantees sitting on the main three EPA advisory committees had received \$77 million from the agency. The policy banning grant recipients from the boards is agency-wide, applying to all 22 advisory committees.

A handful of committee members were pushed out, and many were replaced by industry- or Republican-friendly advisers.

Some groups and researchers sued the EPA in December, saying the policy violated laws governing ethics, advisory committees in general and specific laws that authorized certain committees.

“EPA’s effort to purge independent scientists from its advisory committees has harmful implications for the nation’s health,” Barbara Gottlieb, director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, said at the time. Her group is the leading plaintiff in the case, Physicians for Social Responsibility et al. v. Scott Pruitt.

“Losing top-flight academic researchers, and replacing them with industry-dependent voices, will undermine actions to protect us from toxic pollutants and life-threatening climate change. If EPA won’t abandon this harmful approach, we’re happy to take them to court.”

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076093/search?keyword=EPA>

City leaders press Pruitt aides on climate, staffing

By Kevin Bogardus, 3/12/18

Elected officials from around the country questioned two senior aides to U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt over the weekend.

During a conference hosted by the National League of Cities, local leaders pressed Dennis Lee Forsgren, deputy assistant administrator in EPA's Office of Water, and Albert "Kell" Kelly, a senior adviser to Pruitt, on issues related to infrastructure and climate change.

Forsgren touted President Trump's infrastructure plan and EPA's role in the proposal, including its handling of Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, or WIFIA, loans that can help rebuild water systems.

Forsgren also talked about Pruitt's effort to combat lead poisoning, as well as EPA's work to revise the Lead and Copper Rule.

One worry about the regulation is how the agency will move to phase out lead in drinking water, such as requiring replacements of lead service lines. Forsgren hinted at that problem in his speech yesterday.

"We would expect to be moving out smartly with new rules on the Lead and Copper Rule. We also understand that if we're not careful in how to do that, we could wind up with a large unfunded mandate, so we're working for ways to find financing and other mechanisms to allow for that," Forsgren said.

On climate, Forsgren said the agency has been working to make sure wastewater systems are located in areas that won't be affected by rising global temperatures.

"We are aggressively working on things in the Office of Water like resiliency," Forsgren said. "We can debate about the initiatives, but one thing I can say is Administrator Pruitt is more committed than anyone I've ever met to making sure the next generation has a future."

Kelly, a former Oklahoma banker who has been charged with Pruitt to lead a task force to improve its Superfund program, told officials to take his business card and call his cellphone if they needed EPA's help.

"We work for you," Kelly said. "Contrary to the way sometimes federal government or federal agencies come across, we work for all of you, and we should respond that way."

He discussed work on the Superfund task force, including setting up working groups at the agency to implement 42 recommendations from a report the group issued last year.

Kelly said he expected all those recommendations "to be underway or implemented" by the report's one-year anniversary of June 22 this year.

"Why is that important? It's important because those Superfund sites represent those things that are in our country that are of high environmental concern," Kelly said.

Both EPA officials addressed worries about hundreds of agency employees leaving over the past year. Several EPA staffers took buyouts or retired in 2017.

Last month, the administration proposed deep cuts for the agency in fiscal 2019 that would reduce the workforce to 12,250 employees (Greenwire, Feb. 12).

"You all have the same problems as local officials. You can't do everything you would like to do with the resources you have. We can only use the resources that the Congress provides us," Forsgren said.

Hometown Superfund site

After his remarks to the conference, Kelly spoke to E&E News about his experience with the Superfund program in his hometown of Bristow, Okla.

A family company owns land in the town, including some parcels next to the abandoned Wilcox Oil Co. refinery that is on EPA's list of toxic waste sites (Energywire, Feb. 28).

Kelly is familiar with the old refinery, saying it has its own "unique characteristics," noting the nearby church was damaged by oil leaking from the site.

"I have not been really involved in that Superfund site other than to know what's going on," Kelly said. Asked if he has a formal recusal related to the site, Kelly said he didn't.

"If it were deemed to be something that I should do, I would. But I'm not influencing that. I mean the professionals out of Region 6 are handling it. I'm not doing anything on it," Kelly said. He emphasized his job at EPA was not to work on specific sites but to help improve the program.

"I don't really make any decisions on Superfund sites. Those are made by the administrator and the region. What I try to do is make things move a little faster, utilize our great EPA professionals and help them do their jobs. It has worked pretty well," Kelly said.

More personnel on Superfund are coming to EPA. Last week, Trump nominated Peter Wright, a Dow Chemical Co. lawyer, to lead the agency's Office of Land and Emergency Management, which oversees the program.

Asked how he would work with Wright, Kelly noted that he doesn't "really fold up" under the solid waste office but was ready to work with Wright once confirmed.

"I will do whatever I can to work with him," Kelly said. "We'll work hand in glove with him, and I will work hard not to step on anybody's area."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/377710-cabinet-officials-rebuked-by-white-house-amid-ethics-questions-report>

Cabinet officials rebuked by White House amid ethics questions: report

By Max Greenwood, 3/9/18, 9:29 PM

Four Cabinet-level officials were reportedly scolded in private meetings at the White House last month for news stories detailing questionable ethical behavior.

CNN reported Friday that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary David Shulkin and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt were among those called to the White House.

The meetings were held at the request of White House chief of staff John Kelly, and stressed the importance of avoiding even so much as the appearance of unethical behavior, according to CNN.

The agencies were also reportedly given guidelines, titled "creating a culture of compliance." The advice outlined in that document highlighted the importance of "optics," saying that officials should refrain from behavior that could appear outside their agency's mission.

A number of Cabinet-level officials in the Trump administration have faced scrutiny amid questions dealing with ethical behavior.

Pruitt faced backlash over first-class travel on official trips, while Zinke's travel is the subject of investigations by the Office of Special Counsel and the Interior Department's inspector general.

Carson has also come under fire for purchasing a \$31,000 table for his office, an order he canceled last week, while a trip to Europe by Shulkin last summer was the subject of an inspector general's report. That report found that the VA secretary misused government resources.

CNN

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/09/politics/cabinet-secretaries-ethical-behavior/index.html>

White House scolds Cabinet officials after embarrassing ethics reports

By Cristina Alesci, 3/9/18, 9:22 PM

(CNN)The White House held private meetings with four Cabinet-level officials last month to scold them for embarrassing stories about questionable ethical behavior at their respective agencies, sources familiar with the sessions tell CNN.

Internal watchdogs have launched at least nine audits, reviews or investigations across several Cabinet agencies, and stories about first-class travel, expensive office furniture, and internal strife have become commonplace.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt all met with officials from the White House counsel's office and the Cabinet liaison.

The meetings, held at chief of staff John Kelly's request, were intended to provide "a clear message that optics matter," the sources said.

The White House gave the agencies a set of guidelines in a document titled "creating a culture of compliance," according to portions of the document obtained by CNN.

Among the highlighted advice:

- "You are the best guardian of your reputation. Your recordkeeping practices must be designed with a purpose to prove innocence at the complaint phase or with the press."
- "Even if legal, does not mean you should do it -- always consider optics."
- "Optics questions: Does the event or travel further the President's priorities, your department or agency's mission; or, does it appear recreational or entertainment in nature."
- "Remember, an ethics opinion matters only if the ethics officer received all of the information."

The White House declined to comment.

During the meetings, the White House officials asked agencies to flag any possible problems, including ongoing investigations or audits.

But shortly after the session with Zinke, CNN published a report with several examples that ethics watchdogs say raise questions about whether Zinke is misusing his travel privileges, despite receiving approval from the department's lawyer and ethics officer.

The White House was disappointed after meeting with Zinke because his agency failed to mention the story, of which Interior was aware and quoted a department spokesperson on the record, the source familiar told CNN.

Asked about the White House's unhappiness, an Interior spokesperson who declined to be named, "this is such a nothing-burger."

The person added, "Cabinet secretaries and staff meet with the White House constantly about a number of issues to include advancing policy priorities and strategy."

In his meeting, VA Secretary Shulkin was told he could no longer discuss purging agency employees after he told Politico he had permission from the White House to remove insubordinates. He was also advised that stories about "palace intrigue" were unacceptable, a source familiar said.

When asked about the meeting, the VA public affairs office replied in a statement: "President Trump tasked Secretary Shulkin with reforming the VA so it could better serve the men and women who sacrificed to protect our country. Many reforms have already been enacted, many more are still needed, but nothing will distract the President, the Secretary and the Department from finding the best ways to provide care and benefits to our country's heroes."

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox denied CNN's characterization of Pruitt's White House meeting.

"This is entirely untrue," Wilcox said. "Administrator Pruitt has regular meetings with a number of officials at the White House. Throughout those meetings, the White House has offered continued support of EPA, to help the Agency succeed in furthering the President's environmental agenda."

HUD did not respond to a request for comment.

Last week, Carson canceled a \$31,000 dining room furniture purchase after a whistleblower said she was demoted when she refused to break the law and overspend for redecorating Carson's office. The agency has denied the allegations. HUD's inspector general is also looking into the role Carson's family has played in department business.

It's unclear what answers the agencies provided when asked to spot potential problems, but there are open reviews and inquiries across several agencies.

EPA's internal watchdog is investigating the frequency, cost and extent of Pruitt's travel following reports of his many flights to his home state of Oklahoma and that he used taxpayer funds on first-class flights and luxury hotels that exceeded his predecessors. EPA has cited security concerns as the reason Pruitt flies first class.

Zinke's travel is also under investigation by both the Office of Special Counsel and the Interior Department's inspector general, including a visit he had with a hockey team owned by a former donor to his 2014 campaign.

The VA's inspector general recently released a damning report about Shulkin's July 2017 trip to Europe. The report concluded that Shulkin misused taxpayer funds and inappropriately accepted Wimbledon tickets, and that his then-chief of staff doctored an email to justify the department paying for his wife's airfare to accompany him. Shulkin has said he intends to comply with all the IG recommendations, even though he disagreed with them.

In addition, multiple sources tell CNN that the secretary had been locked in battle with a group of Trump administration officials, who Shulkin says have been working to push him out of the department.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/judge-orders-epa-to-issue-ozone-designations-quickly-783439>

Judge orders EPA to issue ozone designations quickly

By Alex Guillen, 3/12/18, 1:56 PM

A federal judge today said EPA was clearly in the wrong when it missed an October deadline to declare which areas do or do not meet the 2015 ozone standard, and ordered the agency to issue most of the designations by the end of next month.

EPA has said it can complete almost all of the remaining areas by April 30. Though the agency already announced that about 85 percent of the country meets the standard, it has yet to declare how much of the remainder will be designated non-attainment and be required to curb pollution.

The one exception among the remaining areas is the San Antonio region. EPA said it would need until Aug. 10 to review recently submitted data from the state.

But Judge Haywood Gilliam Jr. of the U.S. District Court for Northern California sided with the environmental challengers and ordered EPA to finish the San Antonio decision by July 17. That 127-day timeline gives EPA one week to send Texas proper notice of how it intends to categorize San Antonio, plus the standard 120 days for the state to review and respond.

Gilliam, an Obama appointee, said EPA failed to show why it would need further time to finish the San Antonio designations and that "EPA's reasoning effectively allows states to drive the agency's timeline for statutory compliance."

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA must issue most of the remaining ozone designations by April 30, and the San Antonio designations by July 17.

E&E News PM

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1060075965/search?keyword=EPA>

EPA faces growing calls to replace lead pipes

By Ariel Wittenberg, 3/9/18

U.S. EPA is facing pressure to require some form of lead pipe replacement when it revamps its

lead and copper drinking water regulations.

Democratic Reps. Gwen Moore of Wisconsin and Louise Slaughter of New York have sent a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt this week urging him to require "full replacement of all lead service lines" nationwide.

Lead is a potent neurotoxin that is particularly harmful to children.

Public health experts have long argued that the best way to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water is to replace 7 million to 11 million lead water lines — a job that water utilities estimate would cost \$30 billion.

One of the challenges in removing lead service lines is that no one knows exactly how many exist. The American Water Works Association estimates there could be 3.3 million to 10 million lead pipes in service.

In comments to EPA, AWWA says the agency should require utilities to develop an inventory of lead pipes within their service area.

While AWWA doesn't put a timeline on removal of lead pipes, the water utility interest group does recommend that a final lead regulation "result in ... development of plans for the complete removal of lead service lines through a long-term, shared commitment."

"Lead service line replacement strategies must consider other water and non-water improvements and customer affordability challenges. Locally developed programs, responsive to local circumstances, are essential."

EPA has been working on revising the Lead and Copper Rule since 2010. After the drinking water crisis in Flint, Mich., the agency said a new rule would come out in June 2017. The Trump administration has pushed back that date twice, and a new proposal is now expected in August

2018.

As part of a new rule, AWWA also says EPA should require "robust" corrosion control methods to prevent lead from leaching out of pipes and into water, as well as more public outreach on lead risk.

Slaughter and Moore are also asking EPA to drastically change water sampling requirements.

Critics have long said existing sampling standards can be manipulated in ways that don't give an accurate picture of lead contamination. In addition, it's often the same homes with a low risk of having lead that are tested multiple times, leaving out possible contamination in the wider communities. Large utilities are also allowed to sample just once every three years.

"EPA has allowed these techniques to continue without consequence," the lawmakers wrote. "We must implement strict testing procedures and discourage creative testing strategies that allow failing systems to persist."

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076071/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt ag adviser leaves

By Kevin Bogardus, 3/12/18

Jeff Sands, U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's senior agricultural adviser, has left the agency, sources told E&E News.

Sands resigned from EPA in early March and has returned to Capitol Hill. He started last week as a policy adviser in Florida Republican Rep. Ted Yoho's office, according to Brian Kaveney, a Yoho spokesman.

An EPA spokesman said, "Jeff provided great guidance on issues affecting American farmers and we wish him the best of luck moving forward."

Sands was only at EPA for a few months, having joined the agency this October. At the time, Pruitt said in a statement that Sands' "expertise in agriculture issues will be essential to advancing Agency goals moving forward" (E&E Daily, Oct. 18, 2017).

Prior to EPA, Sands was a lobbyist for agribusiness giant Syngenta AG. He was part of the company's team of lobbyists that worked on several issues before the agency, including the renewable fuel standard, policies dealing with pesticides, as well as changes to scientific advisory work.

Sands' lobbying led to him being granted a waiver from President Trump's ethics pledge, specifically exempting him from lobbyist restrictions.

In its request for the waiver, EPA said Sands was "a valuable addition" to Pruitt's team, whom the administrator needed "to be able to work on the full range of agricultural issues to the maximum extent possible" (Greenwire, Feb. 23).

Sands has also lobbied for the Agricultural Retailers Association and has previous Capitol Hill experience. He has been an aide to Rep. Tom Marino (R-Pa.) on agricultural issues.

AP

<https://apnews.com/10ec44dfe1bb4b8eae54b62f3e5b3ff2/2-ex-US-environmental-chiefs-blast-truck-emissions-loophole>

2 ex-US environmental chiefs blast truck emissions loophole

3/12/18

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Two ex-U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrators say officials should withdraw a proposed trucking emissions exemption, saying it's based on flawed scientific analysis.

Carol M. Browner under President Bill Clinton and Christine Todd Whitman under President George W. Bush criticized the glider kit trucks proposal in Friday's letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

The letter says the industry evades diesel truck pollution standards with rebuilt, high-polluting engines in new truck bodies.

It says the EPA used a Tennessee Technological University study that the school's president has since said to avoid while potential research misconduct is investigated.

Rep. Diane Black pushed the exemption using the study funded by a Tennessee glider kit company whose employees and family donated heavily to her gubernatorial campaign.

Her campaign responded she fights for rural manufacturing jobs.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/377931-two-former-epa-heads-urge-pruitt-to-withdraw-changes-to-glider>

Ex-EPA heads urge Pruitt to scrap changes to truck pollution rule

By Miranda Green, 3/12/18, 11:38 AM

Two former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chiefs are urging current administrator Scott Pruitt to withdraw a proposal to lower pollution standards for heavy-duty trucks after reports the agency may have relied on a compromised study to reach its decision.

The joint letter sent Friday by former administrators Carol Browner and Christine Whitman, who served under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively, asked Pruitt to utilize "sound science" and consider the best available research when making policy decisions regarding pollution standards for glider trucks.

"Throughout our tenures as Administrators, our policy decisions were centered on the best available research and scientific protocols. We are deeply troubled that the Agency's steadfast commitment to public health and environmental protection based on the best available science is being undermined – putting at risk air and water quality and endangering children and families," the letter reads.

Their letter followed reports in late February that a key study the EPA was relying on for its determination to change the rule was being rescinded by the university in charge of it.

The president of Tennessee Tech University disavowed the "Environmental and Economic study of Glider Kit Assemblers" report, writing in a letter to Pruitt directly that experts were now questioning "the methodology and accuracy" of the test, and that EPA should no longer consider the findings.

The school's president, Philip Oldham, also said they were researching allegations of research misconduct.

The former EPA heads wrote Pruitt that in light of the news, he should withdraw his proposal to change the emissions guidelines.

"Not only does it appear that the Tennessee Tech study failed to follow proper research protocol, the conclusions of the study are contrary to a well-established understanding of the pollution from older diesel engines," reads the letter. "In light of the serious questions raised about the study, we urge you withdraw the glider proposal."

The Washington Post first reported in November that the study was funded by Fitzgerald Glider Kits, a company that makes new truck bodies, known as gliders, with refurbished engines, and which is the biggest glider manufacturer in the country.

Currently, the big rigs sold by Fitzgerald utilize a federal law loophole that allows them to run on rebuilt diesel engines that generate 40 to 55 times the air pollution of newer trucks, according to federal estimates, but do not have to comply with modern emissions rules.

Earlier in February, the New York Times reported close ties between Fitzgerald and the Trump administration that have supported keeping the loophole open. President Trump made a stop at Fitzgerald dealership during his campaign and Rep. Diane Black, a Republican candidate for Tennessee governor, has introduced legislation in the past to attempt to keep the loophole permanent.

While her legislation failed, the Times reported that Black initially presented the Tennessee Tech study to Pruitt last fall, which led him to make the exemption to the gliders in November.

Just six weeks earlier, Fitzgerald business entities as well as family members and associates connected to the company contributed at least \$225,000 to Black's campaign for governor, the

Times found through federal campaign disclosures.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/transportation/whiteboard/2018/03/democrats-urge-pruitt-to-drop-glider-rule-repeal-782692>

Democrats urge Pruitt to drop glider rule repeal

By Alex Guillen, 3/12/18, 11:10 AM

Two key Senate Democrats today urged EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to reverse his proposal to repeal part of an Obama-era rule setting new emissions standards for gliders, refurbished engines placed into new truck cabs.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), the ranking member on the Environment and Public Works Committee, and Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), the top Democrat on the EPA appropriations panel, wrote in their letter that they are "deeply troubled" by political and scientific questions around EPA's proposed repeal.

Although the country's biggest glider manufacturer, Fitzgerald Glider Kits, never challenged the glider requirements in court, it successfully petitioned EPA to repeal that part of the rule last year. EPA said it no longer believed it has the statutory authority to regulate gliders like new trucks.

Carper and Udall argue that there is substantial evidence gliders emit drastically more pollution than newly manufactured engines. They note Tennessee Technical University is now investigating a key study on glider emissions that was part of Fitzgerald's pitch to EPA and which the school has warned EPA not to rely on.

They also pointed to a November study from EPA's National Vehicle & Fuel Emissions Laboratory that found that under certain conditions, gliders emitted 43 times the nitrogen oxide emissions of new trucks and as much as 450 times the particulate matter.

Carper and Udall ask in the letter "that you immediately announce plans to withdraw this proposal." The lawmakers also called on EPA to produce documents regarding the repeal, Pruitt's meetings with Fitzgerald executives and other issues.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076087/search?keyword=EPA>

Agency punches back in science advisers lawsuit

By Sean Reilly, 3/12/18

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has sole authority to name members to almost two dozen advisory committees, agency attorneys argue in a new court filing that seeks to throw out a lawsuit challenging membership standards imposed last fall.

"Ultimately, the power to appoint committee members is the administrator's alone and is non-reviewable by the courts under the circumstances presented here," agency lawyers wrote in a lengthy dismissal motion Friday with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The suit "is unprecedented and should be rejected," the filing added.

The salvo marked EPA's first formal response to the legal challenge, which is the first of three brought by various university researchers and advocacy groups since Pruitt announced the new standards in late October.

Most controversially, Pruitt's policy bars current recipients of EPA grant funding from serving on the Science Advisory Board, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee and some 20 other panels that provide outside expertise on subjects ranging from water quality to environmental justice.

Pruitt framed the policy as a matter of preserving the independence of advisory committees from agency influence. Critics have countered that EPA already has adequate conflict-of-interest yardsticks and that Pruitt is simply seeking to stack the panels with members skeptical of the need for tighter environmental regulations, regardless of the scientific evidence.

The plaintiffs in the D.C. District Court suit include one researcher who was forced off the Science Advisory Board, as well as two other former members who argue they would have to give up their EPA grants if they wanted to serve again and are thus suffering a loss of professional opportunity.

Their suit, brought just before Christmas, contends that EPA should have first gotten the approval of the Office of Government Ethics, which oversees compliance with federal ethics laws, and that Pruitt's policy violates the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), in part by setting an unreasonably high bar for independence from the agency (E&E News PM, Dec. 21, 2017).

In its Friday response, however, EPA contended that the policy does not purport to establish ethics norms and thus does not conflict with federal ethics laws. The alleged FACA infractions don't hold up because the plaintiffs fail to cite a violation of any specific membership requirement, the motion continued. Under governmentwide FACA regulations, "committee members serve at the pleasure of the appointing or inviting authority," it said.

The dismissal motion also stressed that the ban on service by active grant recipients was just one of several steps outlined in Pruitt's October directive geared "to promote new and different perspectives by opening up EPA's advisory committees to new membership."

Others include promotion of geographic diversity; the addition of more participants from state, tribal and local governments; and the regular rotation of members, the motion added. Taken together, those steps seek "to enhance the values of diversity, participation, independence and expertise that are at the heart of good government and sound administration," the motion said.

As a bedrock legal matter, EPA also argued that all of the plaintiffs lack the "standing" to bring a suit.

The two former Science Advisory Board members who left the panel before Pruitt issued the directive, for example, have not yet sought to rejoin, the motion said. And Ohio State University professor Robyn Wilson, the one plaintiff who left the board because of the new policy, also lacks standing because she fails to establish "redressability," the dismissal motion added in a footnote. Even if a judge voided Pruitt's directive, his authority "to remove her does not depend on" it, EPA said.

Two other lawsuits, brought earlier this year by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council, are pending in U.S. district courts for Massachusetts and the Southern District of New York, respectively (Greenwire, Jan. 25). As of this morning, EPA had not yet substantively responded to either, according to filings available through the federal courts' online records system.

E&E Daily

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060075999/search?keyword=EPA>

Committee takes up 'good Samaritan' cleanups

By Dylan Brown, 3/12/18

House Natural Resources Committee lawmakers this week will renew an old push to get more

people involved in cleaning up the nation's half-million abandoned hardrock mines.

The Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources will hold a hearing Thursday on the role of nongovernmental groups in non-fuel mining reclamation.

So-called good Samaritans have long wanted to help but continue to be scared away by the risks associated with the massive liabilities at toxic sites.

U.S. EPA has tried to clarify damage responsibilities before, but potential good Samaritans still see too many risks in fixing things like flooded mine shafts when a wrong step can lead to a catastrophe like the 2015 Gold King mine spill.

"We're the most full-throated advocate for the Clean Water Act there is, but just some minor tweaks that make it easier to make improvements to water quality that may not be perfect is what we're looking for," Trout Unlimited President Chris Wood said at a hearing last year (E&E Daily, May 25).

The angler advocates spearheaded a separate good Samaritan bill for coal mines, H.R. 2937, that passed the House last year.

The change to the law governing coal, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, has bipartisan support, but a hardrock equivalent, requiring Clean Water Act action, has not emerged.

Democrats and environmentalists remain concerned that if something goes awry, taxpayers could end up footing the bill. But more broadly, they contend good Samaritans cannot pay for all \$54 billion in reclamation left nationwide.

Democrats have sponsored legislation to charge a fee on hardrock mining to pay for cleanup. Coal companies already pay such a fee.

Separately, the President Trump's infrastructure plan calls for "broadening eligibility" under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act to include water contamination remediation by "non-labile parties" (Greenwire, Jan. 23).

The blueprint also calls for removing restrictions to integrate funding from third parties for Superfund cleanup, a top talking point for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Schedule: The hearing is Thursday, March 15, at 2 p.m. in 1324 Longworth.

Witnesses: TBA.

BN

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=129361589&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Companies' Chemical Secrets Run Up Against the New Toxics Law

By Adam Allington, 3/12/18

Companies aren't justifying the need to keep their chemicals confidential at a time when consumers are demanding more information about the products they buy, environmental groups argue.

Companies are wrangling with updates to the nation's toxic chemicals law that require them to provide more information up front to justify keeping their chemicals secret, and lack of guidance

from the Environmental Protection Agency may be to blame, the industry said.

Keeping their chemicals confidential is crucial for the industry, companies argue, because even small details could reveal trade secrets about how products are made.

More than four months have passed since the October deadline requiring companies to provide “up-front” data to justify new requests that a chemical be classified as “confidential business information,” or CBI, and thus not revealed to consumers.

However, the Environmental Defense Fund claims that EPA is not substantiating those new CBI requests in accordance with the law, and instead leaving the door open for companies to continue to hide critical information on the confidential portion of the TSCA inventory.

“Most companies are still submitting their TSCA documentation the same way they always have, without even trying to substantiate the reason for CBI claims,” Richard Denison, a lead senior scientist with EDF, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group, told Bloomberg Environment.

More Guidance Needed

The logistical challenges related to resubmitting data for thousands of chemicals require more time and guidance from the EPA, according to the industry.

“I think we're still sort of in transition phase. Companies are not acting in bad faith,” James Votaw, an environmental compliance attorney at Keller and Heckman, a Washington, D.C., law firm, said.

Votaw told Bloomberg Environment that claims for confidentiality were rarely, if ever, reviewed by the EPA previously. The new mandate requires documentation submitted upfront to be reviewed within 90 days by the EPA. While there has not been very much enforcement on confidential business information substantiation yet, Votaw said there is certainly a risk for those companies that might attempt to get a false certification.

“This could be a case where EPA pursues one or two high profile enforcement cases to make the point, and from thereafter industry is better at policing itself,” he said.

“But I hope EPA is not too quick to go there because companies are probably just doing what they used to do, and may just need more guidance to make adjustments.”

However, an EPA spokesperson told Bloomberg Environment the agency has in fact provided guidance for companies, including a series of webinars explaining the new substantiation requirements under Section 14 of TSCA.

The spokesperson maintained the agency “will hold companies accountable,” for failing to provide a sufficient data to substantiate their confidentiality requests.

Loss of Intellectual Property

Trade secrets could include everything from a substance's chemical structure, to production volumes, or even the particular site that made it.

Many manufacturers and their downstream customers worry that rolling back confidentiality safeguards could destroy critical trade secrets.

“Without proper security of CBI there is much less incentive for our members to innovate new, more effective formulations at the risk of losing all their hard work,” Owen Caine, executive vice president at the Household & Commercial Products Association, told Bloomberg Environment.

“Communication of seemingly isolated pieces of information about a product formula, including ingredient chemical names, concentrations, Chemical Abstract Service names and numbers, and physicochemical properties, provide key ‘clues’ to a trained eye that could unravel the sophisticated formulary science behind a product that was a significant investment to create,” Caine said.

Whatever the business risks may be, they are running up against a public that is demanding more information about the products it buys.

“Companies are actually starting to compete in the transparency space,” Julie Froelicher, technical relations manager at Procter & Gamble, said.

Speaking at the recent GlobalChem conference in Washington, D.C., Froelicher pointed to emerging state requirements for cleaning product disclosures that are popping up in California, New York, and Maryland. In addition, Walmart's new sustainable chemistry policy asks suppliers to include full ingredient transparency, including products typically protected under trade secrets such as fragrances.

What Qualifies in ‘Inventory Reset’

Prior to the 2016 amendments to TSCA, the EPA's chemical inventory had grown to over 85,000 substances manufactured, imported, or processed in the U.S.—17,800 of which contained concealed information, according to EDF.

As part of amendments, the EPA was ordered to determine which of the existing chemicals on the register are still present in commerce in the United States.

Known as the Inventory Reset Rule or Active-Inactive Rule, it requires any company looking to retain confidentiality on the register to resubmit substantiation documentation. The EPA has five years to review whether that information has a case to remain hidden.

But EDF also alleges that the EPA is misapplying that standard, by letting too many new companies to piggyback onto pre-existing confidentiality claims.

“Our complaint is that even companies that never made a claim in the past are being allowed to

do so during this process,” Denison said.

According to EDF, that allows companies to hide behind trade secret claims to avoid legal obligations to identify potentially harmful chemicals in their products.

“The public cannot tell whether a large majority of the highest-use chemicals in the United States pose health hazards or not,” EDF said in a brief filed March 6 in U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

“These include chemicals that we are likely to breathe or drink, that build up in our bodies, that are in consumer products, and that are being released from industrial facilities into our backyards and streets and forests and streams.”

However, court documents show that industry groups siding with the EPA claim that any changes in confidentiality procedures could impact “core commercial interests, as protecting confidential information has substantial value for many companies and, more generally, is a major factor in promoting innovation and research into new chemicals.”

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076083/search?keyword=EPA>

Judges side with 9/11 whistleblower fired for death threats

By Corbin Hiar, 3/12/18

A Department of Labor panel has rejected a U.S. EPA bid to overturn a ruling that found the environmental agency retaliated against a high-profile 9/11 whistleblower.

The March 1 ruling from the DOL Administrative Review Board upheld a default judgment against EPA for its repeated failures to comply with discovery orders required by Administrative Law Judge Linda Chapman.

The underlying dispute in both cases was EPA's Dec. 30, 2010, termination of Cate Jenkins, an environmental scientist in the agency's Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery, over accusations of threatening to kill her supervisor.

Jenkins, who joined EPA in 1979, had previously raised concerns about the agency's testing of World Trade Center dust after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. She denied ever threatening her boss and claimed that her dismissal was actually in retaliation for her protected whistleblower activities.

Jenkins' termination appeal was upheld by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), which found EPA had violated her due process rights and reinstated her job (Greenwire, May 7, 2012).

Jenkins, represented by the nonprofit Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, asked DOL to force EPA to cover her attorneys' fees.

Chapman, citing EPA's "blatant flouting of the rules of discovery, and repeated violation of my Orders," sided with Jenkins and PEER (Greenwire, April 22, 2015).

The DOL review board determined that the Chapman "did not abuse her discretion in concluding that the extreme sanction of default judgement was warranted, and accordingly affirms the [administrative law judge's] Decision and Order," the ruling says.

The decision was penned by Administrative Appeals Judge E. Cooper Brown. Administrative Appeals Judge Leonard Howie III concurred in part and dissented in part.

The main objections Howie raised surrounded Chapman's assessment of Jenkins' character, in light of documented cases of workplace misconduct, and her application of a less rigorous standard in determining that EPA's discipline of Jenkins was related to her whistleblowing.

Jenkins, who still faces an EPA appeal of the MSPB decision, celebrated the recent DOL ruling.

"The decision for me personally is a wonderful relief," she said in an email today. "You cannot imagine being escorted out to my car in 2010 by cops, not even knowing what I was accused of."

Jenkins' latest victory against her longtime employer, however, may be more significant for future whistleblowers, she claimed.

"Hopefully, in time, EPA will be less enticed by the politically expedient fix of data tampering after disasters, just to reassure the public," Jenkins told E&E News. "There are real human health consequences."

The EPA press office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on the DOL decision.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060076079/search?keyword=EPA>

Judges weigh FOIA requests on alleged scientific misconduct

By Amanda Reilly, 3/12/18

Federal judges today struggled with a convoluted Freedom of Information Act lawsuit stemming from accusations of scientific misconduct at U.S. EPA.

"This is not the typical FOIA case," attorney John Hall, who is representing a coalition of Northeast cities, acknowledged at the outset of the arguments in front of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The case stems from a 2012 decision by EPA Region 1 — which encompasses the Northeastern states — to seek to impose more restrictive nitrogen limits for sewage treatment plants to protect New Hampshire's Great Bay estuary.

In response to the decision, the Great Bay municipal coalition, which includes the city of Dover and neighboring communities, wrote to then-EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Inspector General Arthur Elkins alleging scientific misconduct.

The coalition claimed that EPA Region 1 ignored peer-reviewed studies and analysis by an independent technical advisory committee to impose the limits, which the cities say will cost millions of dollars to meet.

EPA responded to the group's concerns with a two-page letter concluding that EPA "has not seen evidence that Region 1 has engaged in scientific misconduct."

On Oct. 4, 2012, law firm Hall & Associates filed a FOIA request on behalf of the coalition seeking records that EPA relied on to come to its conclusion that there was no misconduct. Hall followed up on Oct. 22 with eight additional FOIA requests related to nutrient loading, Region 1 decisionmaking and EPA's peer review process.

EPA responded to the first request but denied the others because they were "articulated in the form of an interrogatory-like question." In other words, responding would have required the agency to conduct analysis and research.

In a March 2015 decision, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that EPA adequately responded to the first request and agreed with the agency that the other FOIA requests were improper because they could be construed as questions. After a back-and-forth with Hall and lawyers from EPA, the court suggested a modified FOIA request. EPA provided Hall with more documents.

The law firm, though, was still unsatisfied with the response. More than a year after the March decision, the firm asked the court to reconsider and filed a motion for attorneys' fees, arguing that it should receive fees because EPA released more documents as a result of its litigation.

After the district court denied both requests, the law firm appealed to the D.C. Circuit.

Hall today argued that, despite the concerns at EPA headquarters about the wording in the FOIA requests, there was no confusion among Region 1 staffers about the information that was sought.

The FOIA requests were about a "specific issue specifically defined," Hall said, adding that his law firm has filed "virtually the same" type of FOIA requests in the past.

He complained that EPA had not yet provided all relevant documents, despite the district court's decision to reword the FOIA requests.

But at multiple points during today's arguments, the three-judge panel appeared confused about the focus of the appeal.

"I'm not sure what you're really asking for," said Senior Judge David Sentelle, a Reagan appointee.

Judge Brett Kavanaugh, a George W. Bush appointee who presided over today's proceedings, several times pressed attorneys for both the plaintiffs and EPA over the issue of attorneys' fees.

"I'm trying to figure out why we're here," Kavanaugh said.

While the FOIA requests in question occurred during the Obama administration, the Trump EPA has continued to defend against the case. In court documents, EPA has charged that Hall & Associates refused to work with the agency to clarify the requests because it was "incentivized by the allure of potentially large attorneys' fees."

EPA says it offered the firm the opportunity to modify or clarify the request. Hall instead took the case to the courts.

Peter Pfaffenroth, an assistant U.S. attorney representing the agency, today said that EPA acted in "good faith" and charged that the litigation was "an attempt to weaponize FOIA."

"These are sophisticated plaintiffs," Pfaffenroth told the judges.

Judge Patricia Millett, an Obama appointee, also seemed concerned about Hall's reticence to modify its FOIA requests outside of the litigation process.

"I don't think you made it very clear," she said, adding, "Why didn't you just ask for all documents that were involved in the preparation of your response?"

The court is expected to issue a decision in the coming months.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Graham, Amy
Sent: Sun 9/3/2017 8:29:33 PM
Subject: Fwd: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

He just called Michael and wanted to know who wrote the AP press release because "its very political". He was making a point that Michael and James both worked at the RNC. How do you want to handle?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com>
Date: September 3, 2017 at 4:25:40 PM EDT
To: "Graham, Amy" <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

Thanks, I actually just spoke with Michael Abboud who recommended I get in touch with you. Please give me a call when you get a chance: 571-255-9442.

Trying to get some additional information about this statement: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-response-aps-misleading-story>

EPA Response To The AP's Misleading Story | US EPA
www.epa.gov

Matthew Nussbaum
POLITICO White House Reporter
Mnussbaum@politico.com
C: (571)-255-9442
@MatthewNussbaum

From: Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 4:24:17 PM
To: Matthew Nussbaum
Subject: Re: Politico inquiry -- on deadline

Matthew- Has anyone gotten back to you yet? What's your specific request?

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 3, 2017, at 4:09 PM, Matthew Nussbaum <mnussbaum@politico.com> wrote:

Hi,

Can someone please give me call at their earliest convenience: 571-255-9442.

Thanks so much.

Matt

Matthew Nussbaum
POLITICO White House Reporter
Mnussbaum@politico.com
C: (571)-255-9442
@MatthewNussbaum

To: Ford, Hayley[ford.hayley@epa.gov]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office
Sent: Mon 5/7/2018 9:24:03 PM
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

The Chairwoman actually has quite a bit of travel coming up and the next week where she has some availability in DC is the second week of June. When we start nailing down her June schedule, can I circle back with you then?

-Alana

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, May 1, 2018 12:20 PM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Alana,

Just wanted to follow up with you here and see if any of those dates worked. Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 7:05 PM
To: 'Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office' <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Of course! We could do lunch May 7, 8, 10, 21, or 25. Let me know what might work!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office [<mailto:awilson@gop.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 4:09 PM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Unfortunately, the Chairwoman will be on the road for the next few weeks so right now I am looking at something week of May 7th or May 21st. Let me know if there are preferable dates and we can go from there.

Thanks!

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:56 AM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Got it. We could also do breakfast or coffee if that's easier – really just looking to get them together at some point in the next couple weeks. Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office [<mailto:awilson@gop.com>]

Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:47 AM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Thanks for reaching out. I know that right now neither of those options will work for the Chairwoman (we have quite a bit of travel coming up in the next few weeks), but let me speak with our team here and I'll send over a few options.

Thanks,

Alana

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:34 AM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Alana,

As Mike mentioned that the Chairwoman is out of town this week, wanted to offer Wednesday (25th) or Friday (27th) of next week instead.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Mike Reed - Communications/Research [<mailto:Mreed@gop.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:31 AM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Adding Alana to this email. She is the Chairwoman's scheduler. Ronna isn't in D.C. this week, but maybe you guys can find a time at a later date. Will let yall coordinate.

Thanks for reaching out!

Mike

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:20 AM

To: Mike Reed - Communications/Research <Mreed@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Mike,

I work with Jahan over at the EPA and understand he's spoken to you about getting Ronna McDaniel and Administrator Pruitt together for lunch. The Administrator could do lunch tomorrow, Wednesday or Friday of this week if Ronna is free any of those days. Let us know if that works or feel free to connect me with her scheduler. We were thinking the Capitol Hill Club would be convenient for her.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Tue 10/31/2017 7:57:11 PM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need

to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of**
Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

(718) 612-3356

<http://www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan>

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 9/2/2017 2:47:52 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by American Bankers Association: TRUMP's dozens of nominations -- MAGGIE and GLENN on how John Kelly 'grates' on POTUS -- THE HARVEY RELIEF WRANGLING -- Is OBAMACARE repeal dead? -- WEEKEND READS -- B'DAY: Lisa Barclay

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by American Bankers Association

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

[Listen to the Playbook Audio Briefing](#)

Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP announced more than three dozen White House appointments late Friday night. He tapped Oklahoma Rep. Jim Bridenstine to run NASA and Pennsylvania Rep. Tom Marino to become the next drug czar. Marino previously turned down the position citing a family illness.

THESE NOMINATIONS will spark special elections in Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. Both seats are solidly conservative. But special elections are tricky. You never quite know what you're going to get.

BRIDENSTINE'S APPOINTMENT won't be without controversy. Florida Playbooker Marc Caputo scooped that both Republican Sen. Marco Rubio and Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida voiced early opposition to his pick.

CAPUTO: "Republican Marco Rubio and Democrat Bill Nelson wouldn't say if they'd buck the president and vote against Bridenstine, who was nominated Friday. But they suggested the GOP congressman's political past would needlessly spark a partisan fight in the Senate that could ultimately damage NASA. Bridenstine also trashed Rubio during last year's GOP presidential primary, although Rubio said he doesn't hold that against the congressman.

"The bipartisan pushback against Trump's nominee for NASA administrator underscores the importance of the agency to Florida, home of the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral. Nelson, as a member of Congress in 1986 flew on a Space Shuttle Columbia mission; he also has a home on what's known as the state's Space Coast. 'The head of NASA ought to be a space professional, not a politician,' Nelson said in a brief written statement to POLITICO." <http://politi.co/2vzkGYf>

RICHARD GRENNELL, former spokesman for the U.S. mission to the United Nations under President George W. Bush, was also nominated to be the next ambassador of Germany. **Full list of last night's appointments** <http://politi.co/2wvr9R7>

SCHOCK UPDATE -- "Prosecutors deny probing Schock's sexuality," by Josh Gerstein: "Prosecutors are denying claims that they improperly investigated former Rep. Aaron Schock's sexuality as they probed allegations that he used his office and campaign funds for personal purposes. In a late-night court filing Friday, prosecutors rejected Schock's lawyers arguments that such inquiries into the former lawmaker's personal life were part of a pattern of prosecutorial misconduct so outrageous that the criminal case against the Illinois Republican should be thrown out.

"The prosecution team denied investigating Schock's sexuality, but said it did need to establish the nature of his relationship with a Panamanian diplomat because his travels with her appeared related to campaign expenses the government believed may have been unrelated to his campaign. 'We fully agree with Defendant Schock that his sexuality is completely irrelevant in this criminal matter,' prosecutors Timothy Bass and Eugene Miller wrote in the filing in federal court in Urbana. 'It was not of interest to the government, and the government did not inquire about it.'" <http://politi.co/2vAj68A>

--AN INTERESTING NUGGET FROM THE LEGAL WRANGLING - From a recent government filing: "[I]n late 2013 ... Schock accused a former staffer of inappropriately accessing his friend's (Karla Gonzalez's) social media account and falsely advised the former staffer that the FBI and Capitol Police were investigating the matter. As a result of Defendant Schock's accusation and false representation of a law enforcement investigation, the former staffer retained legal counsel and incurred legal fees of more than \$10,000, which were paid by the former staffer's father. Defendant Schock later acknowledged, after being confronted by the former staffer's father, that his statement of a law enforcement investigation was false, stating in an email to the staffer's father that 'I apologized and offered to take care of things,' and he agreed to reimburse the staffer's father for \$7,500 of the legal fees."

INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE -- NYT A1, "Forceful Chief of Staff Grates on Trump, and the Feeling Is Mutual," by Glenn Thrush and Maggie Haberman: "President Trump was in an especially ornery mood after staff members gently suggested he refrain from injecting politics into day-to-day issues of governing after last month's raucous rally in Arizona, and he responded by lashing out at the most senior aide in his presence. It happened to be his new chief of staff, John F. Kelly. Mr. Kelly ... reacted calmly, but he later told other White House staff members that he had never been spoken to like that during 35 years of serving his country. In the future, he said, he would not abide such treatment ...

"The question now is how long Mr. Kelly will stay, with estimates ranging from a month to a year at the most. ... The president, for his part, has marveled at the installation of management controls that would have been considered routine in any

other White House. 'I now have time to think,' a surprised Mr. Trump has told one of his senior aides repeatedly over the last few weeks. Mr. Kelly cannot stop Mr. Trump from binge-watching Fox News, which aides describe as the president's primary source of information gathering. But Mr. Trump does not have a web browser on his phone, and does not use a laptop, so he was dependent on aides like Stephen K. Bannon, his former chief strategist, to hand-deliver printouts of articles from conservative media outlets.

"Now Mr. Kelly has thinned out his package of printouts so much that Mr. Trump plaintively asked a friend recently where The Daily Caller and Breitbart were. ... While Mr. Trump still reaches out to allies outside the administration ... more often than not it has been through the White House switchboard and not on his personal phone. And Mr. Kelly has usually listened in on the calls, according to two people with direct knowledge." <http://nyti.ms/2wsmVeO>

-- **"John Kelly Pushing Out Omarosa for 'Triggering' Trump,"** by The Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay and Asawin Suebsaeng: "Newly minted White House chief of staff John Kelly has sought to put a dent in the influence of one of President Donald Trump's most famous advisers: Omarosa Manigault. The former Apprentice co-star-who currently serves as the communications director for the Office of Public Liaison-has seen her direct access to the president limited since Kelly took the top White House job in late July ... In particular, Kelly has taken steps to prevent her and other senior staffers from getting unvetted news articles on the president's Resolute desk-a key method for influencing the president's thinking, and one that Manigault used to rile up Trump about internal White House drama." <http://thebea.st/2vzZfWU>

REUTERS'S JIM OLIPHANT: TRUMP'S EMPATHY TEST -- "For a man who prefers to project a glowering brusqueness, Donald Trump's trip to Houston on Saturday provides him with the opportunity to show a warmer, more empathetic side - and perhaps connect with some Americans critical of his presidency. Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, became known as the 'comforter-in-chief' for his role in consoling victims of mass shootings and terror attacks. But the flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey marks the first large-scale national tragedy under Trump's watch." <http://reut.rs/2xF4GBr>

"The White House said Trump will first travel to Houston to meet with flood survivors and volunteers who assisted in relief efforts and then will move on to Lake Charles, Louisiana, another area hammered by the storm. Trump first visited the region on Tuesday, but stayed clear of the disaster zone, saying he did not want to hamper rescue efforts. Instead, he met with cabinet members, state and local leaders, and first responders. He was criticized, however, for not meeting with victims of the worst storm to hit Texas in 50 years, and for largely focusing on the logistics of the government response rather than the suffering of residents." <http://reut.rs/2xF4GBr>

TRUMP'S SATURDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is traveling to Ellington Field, Texas, where he will visit with people impacted by the hurricane. He then will head to a Harvey relief center and meet with members of the Texas congressional delegation. He then goes to

Chennault International in Lake Charles, Louisiana, where he meets with "members of the county emergency operations center, National Guard and Cajun Navy."

FOR YOUR RADAR -- REUTERS: "Russia's Putin won't attend U.N. General Assembly" <http://reut.rs/2x0zSOs>

***** **A message from the American Bankers Association:** It's no secret that banks help create jobs and economic growth by lending to America's employers. But America's banks themselves employ thousands of women and men. Can you guess how many? Is it 200,000, 1 million or 2 million? Find out: <http://politi.co/2wc3FR6> *****

THE LATEST ON HARVEY RELIEF -- "White House rejiggers Harvey request as dollars dwindle," by Jen Scholtes, Sarah Ferris, and Rachael Bade: "The federal government is burning through cash even faster than the White House estimated in responding to Hurricane Harvey, prompting the Trump administration to revamp its emergency funding request. The White House sent a formal plea to lawmakers Friday evening seeking \$7.85 billion as a down payment in aid for areas ravaged by the superstorm -- nearly \$2 billion more than the administration estimated earlier in the day.

"The total includes \$7.4 billion for [FEMA's] disaster relief account and \$450 million to support the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program for small businesses and homeowners. The White House warned that further delays in raising the debt limit could jeopardize recovery efforts, after previously cautioning that action would be needed by month's end to avoid a downgraded credit rating and, ultimately, default.

"Indeed, if the debt ceiling is not raised, it may not be possible to outlay the requested supplemental appropriations or funds for other critical Government operations,' White House budget director Mick Mulvaney wrote in the request. The House is expected to pass its first installment of hurricane aid next week, but congressional leaders are still talking with the Trump administration about process and timing in the Senate." <http://politi.co/2vSutUI> ... **Mulvaney's letter**
<http://politi.co/2vzB2Aa>

-- TOP REPUBLICAN LEADERS have been telling us that the easiest way to get this through is to lift the debt ceiling at the same time.

-- "Harvey is likely to be the second-most costly natural disaster in U.S. history," by L.A. Times' Don Lee: "Between the shutdown of oil refineries and chemical plants, impaired roads and ports, and widespread damage to homes, businesses and cars, the economic toll from Hurricane Harvey is now being estimated as the second-costliest natural disaster in U.S. history, trailing only the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Some economic researchers, including the national forecasting firm Moody's Analytics, are putting the price tag of Harvey at \$81 billion to \$108 billion or more, most of that in damage to homes and commercial property." <http://lat.ms/2wp9JqW>

--"Storm deaths: Death toll from Harvey tops 50," by Houston Chronicle's Cindy

George, Margaret Kadifa, and Lindsay Ellis: "More than 50 people - including a veteran Houston police officer - have died or are feared dead in the Houston area and beyond in flooding or circumstances connected to Tropical Storm Harvey, according to local officials. ... Local officials expect the grim discoveries of additional bodies once the floodwaters retreat and the streams, rivers and bayous go back into their banks."

<http://bit.ly/2vTjPx0>

THIS COULD BE A PROBLEM -- "Trump's 'Dreamers' decision could roil shutdown, debt talks," by Rachael Bade and Heather Caygle: "Congressional Republicans are worried that a decision from President Donald Trump to rescind protections for so-called Dreamers could undercut fall negotiations with Democrats to keep the government open and avoid a federal default. The White House said Friday that Trump would announce Tuesday whether he would nix President Barack Obama's executive action granting legal status to those who immigrated to the U.S. as children, known as 'Dreamers.' Republicans have long panned the so-called Deferred Action for Children Arrivals, or DACA, as an unconstitutional overreach.

"But now is not the time to blow up the program, GOP leadership sources in Congress caution. Doing so, they worry, could antagonize Democrats in a month where the GOP desperately needs their help to raise the debt ceiling and keep the government open. Senior Republicans have also spoken privately of a potential bipartisan accord later in the year that would codify DACA legislatively, in return for a down payment on Trump's border wall with Mexico. While many agree it's unlikely and perhaps wishful thinking, they worry Trump ending the program would make such a deal impossible.

"In an interview with WCLO in his hometown of Janesville, Wis., Friday, Speaker Paul Ryan cautioned Trump against killing the program. The Wisconsin Republican said Obama did 'not have the authority to do what he did,' but also argued that Congress - not Trump - has to 'fix' the matter. '[T]here are people who are in limbo,' Ryan said. 'These are kids who know no other country, who were brought here by their parents and don't know another home. And so I really do believe there that there needs to be a legislative solution.'" <http://politi.co/2iPGGIA>

BREITBART: "WHITE HOUSE SIGNALS CAVE: NOT PUSHING CONGRESS FOR BORDER WALL FUNDING, WON'T SHUT DOWN GOVERNMENT," by Adam Shaw: <http://bit.ly/2esDzRD>

DEATH OF OBAMACARE REPEAL? -- "Moment of truth arrives for Obamacare repeal," by Rachana Pradhan and John Bresnahan: "In a potential death knell for efforts to repeal Obamacare -- at least this year -- the Senate parliamentarian has ruled that Republicans face a Sept. 30 deadline to kill or overhaul the law with only 50 votes, Democrats on the Senate Budget Committee said Friday. Congress is facing fights in September over boosting the federal debt limit, government funding, defense programs and the FAA, among other issues. Adding another Obamacare repeal battle to that schedule could prove too much for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who has all but said he's moving on from health care. In search of a badly needed

legislative victory, McConnell and other Senate Republicans have shifted their focus instead to tax reform." <http://politi.co/2ws2O0c>

MIKE SCHMIDT and MAGGIE HABERMAN -- "Mueller Has Early Draft of Trump Letter Giving Reasons for Firing Comey": "The special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, has obtained a letter drafted by President Trump and a top political aide that offered an unvarnished view of Mr. Trump's thinking in the days before the president fired the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey. The circumstances and reasons for the firing are believed to be a significant element of Mr. Mueller's investigation, which includes whether Mr. Trump obstructed justice by firing Mr. Comey. The letter, drafted in May, was met with opposition from Donald F. McGahn II, the White House counsel, who believed that its angry, meandering tone was problematic ... Among Mr. McGahn's concerns were references to private conversations the president had with Mr. Comey, including times when the F.B.I. director told Mr. Trump he was not under investigation in the F.B.I.'s continuing Russia inquiry.

"Mr. McGahn successfully blocked the president from sending the letter -- which Mr. Trump had composed with Stephen Miller, one of the president's top political advisers -- to Mr. Comey. But a copy was given to the deputy attorney general, Rod J. Rosenstein, who then drafted his own letter. Mr. Rosenstein's letter was ultimately used as the Trump administration's public rationale for Mr. Comey's firing, which was that Mr. Comey had mishandled the investigation into Hillary Clinton's private email server. ... [In May] Mr. McGahn met ... with Mr. Trump and told him that if he fired Mr. Comey, the Russia investigation would not go away. Mr. Trump told him ... that he understood that firing the F.B.I. director might extend the Russia investigation, but that he wanted to do it anyway." <http://nyti.ms/2grUtR4>

CYBER WAR -- NYT A1, "Russian Election Hacking Efforts, Wider Than Previously Known, Draw Little Scrutiny," by Nicole Perlroth, Michael Wines and Matt Rosenberg: "The assaults on the vast back-end election apparatus - voter-registration operations, state and local election databases, e-poll books and other equipment - have received far less attention than other aspects of the Russian interference ... Yet the hacking of electoral systems was more extensive than previously disclosed, The New York Times found. ... [H]ackers breached at least [three] providers of critical election services well ahead of the 2016 voting." <http://nyti.ms/2vT84qh>

WEST WING DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- "Longtime Trump aide Keith Schiller tells people he intends to leave White House," by CNN's Dana Bash, Noah Gray and Jeremy Diamond: "Schiller has told associates within the last two weeks that he plans to leave the White House at the end of September or in early October ... Schiller has told people his primary reason for leaving was financial ... Schiller earns a \$165,000 annual salary at the White House -- a downgrade from his annual earnings before he followed Trump to the White House. ... White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the story was 'not true' and declined to comment further. Schiller ... earned \$294,000 ... last year." <http://cnn.it/2vA8s1N>

--@JenniferJJacobs: "Longtime Trump aide Keith Schiller to exit post as Oval operations dir end of Sept, I'm told. Lined up job in private sector that pays more."

Jeremy Diamond

THE JUICE ...

-- **CONDI RICE** headlined a fundraiser for Ed Gillespie last night at Dan and Sonya Runde's McLean, Virginia, home. ***The invite*** <http://bit.ly/2vzCvXr>

--**COREY LEWANDOWSKI** is heading to London later this month to be the keynote speaker for a small off-the-record dinner organized by a macro research firm. The Sept. 13 dinner will likely be attended by portfolio managers and traders from asset managers and hedge funds, according to a source familiar with the dinner. When asked which firm was organizing the dinner and if they were paying for his time, Lewandowski texted "No" and didn't respond to further questions._

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Director of the National Economic Council Gary Cohn, left, walks away from reporters after doing television interviews at the White House on Sept. 1. || Alex Brandon/AP Photo

WASHINGTON INC. -- "How Washington lobbyists fought flood insurance reform," by Zach Warmbrodt and Theo Meyer: "The catastrophic weather in Texas has thrown the spotlight on the federal government's troubled flood insurance program, which is nearly \$25 billion in debt after huge payouts following Katrina, Sandy and other devastating hurricanes. But as Houston starts the long process of recovering, lobbyists in Washington have already maneuvered to slow lawmakers efforts' to overhaul the National Flood Insurance Program and protect their industries' profits.

"The powerful home builders' lobby helped kill a proposal that would have phased out coverage for new construction in high-risk areas. The National Association of Realtors blocked an attempt to rein in discounted insurance rates that homeowners can get when their flood risk increases. And the American Bankers Association has warned of a 'regional foreclosure crisis' if Congress axes coverage for homes with excessive claims.

"Lawmakers who want to reel in the program are finding that they must appease the influential industry groups whose support they need to move forward. 'We want to have a vibrant construction industry,' said Rep. Dennis Ross (R-Fla.), who's pushing for a greater private-sector presence in the flood insurance market. 'We want to have a

vibrant real estate industry. That's all great. But we're incentivizing building in high-risk areas, which is a moral hazard." <http://politi.co/2exujzw>

HMM -- "Fire Spotted at Russian Diplomatic Building in D.C.," by Jana Winter in Foreign Policy: "The Trade Representative of the Russian Federation, located on Connecticut Ave. in northwest Washington, is one of several diplomatic buildings being shuttered as part of a tit-for-tat with Moscow. The building serves as both an office and a residence for Russian diplomatic staff. Smoke and flames in the back were clearly visible starting late-afternoon Friday, and staff could be seen dumping what appeared to be paper into the fire." <http://atfp.co/2esijLX>

GOOD NEWS FOR RAHM - "CPD: August shootings down 45 percent from last year," by Chicago Sun Times' Mitchell Armentrout: "Shootings declined by 45.4 percent in August and murders were down by 47.4 percent compared to the same month last year, according to Chicago Police statistics. This August saw more than 300 people wounded in shootings, along with at least 52 deaths ruled homicides, according to data kept by the Chicago Sun-Times. Police still touted it as the sixth straight month to see a decline in shootings over the previous year, the city's longest such stretch in four years." <http://bit.ly/2ew1rYd>

THE ROKITA PILE ON CONTINUES -- "Former aides to GOP lawmaker describe toxic work environment," by AP's Brian Slodysko in Indianapolis: "Staffers in tears. Pay cuts for small mistakes. Aides who walked out of the office - and never came back. Working for four-term Republican Rep. Todd Rokita of Indiana is an exacting job with long hours, made more difficult by a boss known for micromanaging and yelling at his staff, according to 10 former aides who spoke to The Associated Press. ... [E]ven in Congress ... Rokita's behavior is outside the norm, according to the former aides, most of whom have worked for other elected officials. ...

"During the 2010 campaign, a worker was booted from a staff meeting and instructed to clean Rokita's vehicle, which included scrubbing the carpets, according to two people with direct knowledge of the incident. The reason? A volunteer driver had body odor the night before, they say. Rokita's campaign said the congressman did not recall the incident. ... Some say he turned angry over small details, like the kind of letterhead used on office or campaign documents. ...

"A Jasper County teacher asked Rokita to leave his high school civics class in November 2016 after a talk that was supposed to be about the Constitution got off on the wrong foot, according to two students. Rokita had asked the class if they were taught about 'American Exceptionalism.' But when a number of students seemed puzzled by the concept, he had a testy exchange with their teacher, Paul Norwine, whom he criticized for not including it in the curriculum, the students said. Tensions eased and the talk proceeded, but the class was dumbfounded. ... Rokita's campaign did not dispute the students' account." <http://bit.ly/2grWHQy>

--FLASHBACK -- John Bresnahan and Rachael Bade, Aug. 18: "The agonizing, 8-

page memo on how to chauffeur a congressman: Pity the poor aide charged with driving Rep. Todd Rokita around his district": <http://politi.co/2vTyIF3>

WHAT JAKE IS READING -- "Romney, Clinton and others counsel a panicked political reporter on fatherhood," by WaPo's Ben Terris: "From the various politicians and D.C. denizens I spoke with, it's clear that today, the smartphone is the greatest impediment to being a good parent (Maggie Haberman, a star Trump chronicler for the New York Times and mother of three, said she once filed an entire story on her BlackBerry from her son's kindergarten graduation ceremony). Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) has gone to some extreme measures to combat this problem. In 2013, Flake took two of his sons on a trip to a deserted island, where they would survive by spearing fish and scavenging for coconuts. 'It was worth the risk just to have time without cellphones, without electronics,' Flake, 54, said. 'Just to have five or six days with their dad.' But what about being a good dad for the other 360 days of the year?

"Flake says the best advice he ever got about that came shortly after he first arrived to Congress, and it came from his Arizona congressional colleague, now-former senator Jon Kyl (R). 'He told me to involve my kids as much as I can in this job,' Flake said. 'They were either going to resent this life or revel in it.' This past summer, one of Flake's sons served as a page in the Senate. 'It's great,' Flake said. 'Not only did I get to see him more, but he had to call me sir!'" ***With cameos by Jason Kander and Tim Kaine***
<http://wapo.st/2wqmaCY>

MEDIAWATCH -- "After Mass Layoffs, Can Glenn Beck Still Save 'The Blaze'?" by The Daily Beast's Lloyd Grove: "By the time Beck himself spoke to his dwindling army of underlings as one of his personal bodyguards from Gavin de Becker's celebrity protection service stood watch, nearly 60 of their coworkers had been abruptly fired—a body count that amounted to almost 30 percent of the workforce, according to estimates compiled by shell-shocked survivors. ... Among the departed, according to sources, were camera operators, producers, a receptionist, a beloved longtime makeup artist, and a well-regarded graphic artist who didn't learn about his sacking until a coworker reached him Thursday night on his cell phone in Houston, where he'd trekked to help relatives cope with the floods of Hurricane Harvey." <http://thebea.st/2eqyHwv>

--"Jeff Bezos Wants To Give More Money To Charity. He Should Pay His Workers First," by WaPo reporter Fredrick Kunkle in HuffPost: "One of the wealthiest men in the world is thinking of ways to give back. But he's still taking from the very people who helped him build his fortune. ... Many people worked hard for Bezos to help make him so rich, and he has a record of treating them poorly. ... Two years ago, however, Bezos slashed retirement benefits [for Post employees]. For reasons that remain unclear, he froze a pension plan that was awash in so much money that neither he nor the company would possibly have faced additional liabilities." <http://bit.ly/2vRp7c9>

-- "Politico rides wave of Brexit interest with new UK news service," by FT's Matthew Garrahan. <http://on.ft.com/2vTAwID> ... ***Subscribe to London Playbook***
<http://politi.co/2txnK5S>

***** **A message from the American Bankers Association:** America's banks play a critical role in generating economic growth while delivering safety and convenience for customers. The two million women and men who work for America's banks safeguard \$12.9 trillion in deposits and originate \$2.4 trillion in home loans. They provide \$331 billion in loans to small businesses and \$175 billion in loans to farmers and ranchers. Banks' fraud protection measures stop at least \$11 billion in attempted fraud each year. And thousands of banker volunteers deliver financial literacy lessons annually to millions of young Americans to help them become financially successful adults. Find out more at www.aba.com/AmericasBanks, #AmericasBanks *****

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker - **15 keepers** <http://politi.co/2wrkCc1>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"The princess myth: Hilary Mantel on Diana"** - The Guardian: "The end of royal status stripped away Diana's protection. There was a buzz in the air, a doomy feeling, as if her options were running out. She still played games with the press, but they knew a dirtier game. She teased them, and they chased her down, not killing her yet. She is supposed to have feared sinister forces, anticipated that her end. As every fortune-teller knows, such hints assume precision in retrospect." <http://bit.ly/2wYu4VR> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--**"The Sucker, the Sucker!"** by Amia Srinivasan in the London Review of Books: Octopuses "are sophisticated problem solvers; they learn, and can use tools; and they show a capacity for mimicry, deception and, some think, humour. Their very strangeness makes octopuses hard to study. Their intelligence is like ours, and utterly unlike ours. Octopuses are the closest we can come, on earth, to knowing what it might be like to encounter intelligent aliens." <http://bit.ly/2gpDvmj>

--**"Has disruption from e-commerce run its course?"**: "Alibaba's Jack Ma has put it bluntly: 'We must embrace physical space.'" <http://bit.ly/2wYu4VR>

--**"Lessons from camels,"** by Robert Skinner in The Monthly: "A ten-day camel trek through the South Australian outback. With your parents." <http://bit.ly/2wYu4VR> (h/t Longreads.com)

--**"Ideas were not enough,"** by Mark Koyama in Aeon Magazine: "It wasn't the ideas of Bayle or Spinoza or Locke driving the rise of state power, it was the need to raise resources for governing and war. For the rising fiscal-military state, religious uniformity and persecution simply became too expensive and inefficient." <http://bit.ly/2wYu4VR>

--**"How Do You Make a TV Show Set in the West Bank?"** by The New Yorker's David Remnick: "What the thriller 'Fauda' reveals about what Israelis will watch-and what they won't." <http://bit.ly/2epXfFX>

--**"How an Angry Candy Man Revolutionized the Modern Sushi Industry,"** by Tom Redmond, Nao Sano and Naomi Schanen in Bloomberg - per TheBrowser.com's description: "Case study of benefits from automation. Kisaku Suzuki had the idea for sushi-making robots in the mid-1970s, and persevered despite ridicule from Japanese chefs. It took him five years to produce a viable machine - and when he did, he set off the worldwide sushi boom of the 1980s, opening up an elite cuisine to a mass market. In Japan, three-quarters of sushi restaurants are now mechanised." <http://bit.ly/2evwcg6>

--**"America's First Addiction Epidemic,"** by Christopher Finan, in an excerpt from "Drunks: An American History" in Longreads: "The records of colonial traders who operated in Indian country show that 80 percent of the charges to government accounts were for gifts of alcohol to the natives." <http://bit.ly/2eM32Gp> ... **\$16.30 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2eMloqD>

--**"The Blind Traveler,"** by Lucas Reilly in Mental Floss: "How James Holman felt his way around the world to become history's most prolific explorer." <http://bit.ly/2wtGDFg>

--**"The Temptations of the Brown Box,"** by Jobie S. Turner in The Strategy Bridge: "The 'brown box' is the new black. Take a quick view of any American neighborhood and brown boxes adorn the front of dwellings like so many square garden gnomes. Whether delivered by Federal Express, United Parcel Service (UPS), or the U.S. Post Office, the ubiquitous cubes illustrate the power of online commerce delivering all manner of goods directly to the consumer." <http://bit.ly/2eLXPOM>

--**"The school beneath the wave: the unimaginable tragedy of Japan's tsunami,"** by Richard Lloyd Parry in The Guardian: "There was the loudspeaker car from the town hall going up and down, saying, 'Super-tsunami imminent: evacuate, evacuate!' Sirens, too. Everyone in the village must have heard them. But we didn't take it seriously." <http://bit.ly/2wY6Z5G>

--**"101 things we have learned from the Online Magazine"** - Christies.com: "The Online Magazine, our weekly email of editorial highlights from Christies.com, celebrates its 100th edition this week. To mark the occasion, we present a miscellany of useful facts, tips and insights published over the past two years." <http://bit.ly/2iMNeHM> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"Emotional Intelligence Needs a Rewrite,"** by Lisa Feldman Barrett in Nautilus Magazine: "Think you can read people's emotions? Think again." <http://bit.ly/2vQYofZ>

--**"Tomorrow Belongs to God,"** by Alan Ruschel, Jakson Follmann and Hélio Hermito Zampier Neto in the Players Tribune - per Longreads.com's description: "LaMia Flight 2933, carrying Brazil's Chapecoense football club to the 2016 Copa Sudamericana in Colombia, crashed as it approached the airport. Only six passengers survived, including three players. This is their story, in their words." <http://bit.ly/2evx2JH>

Playbookers



<http://bit.ly/2omgw1D>): Special episode on Hurricane Harvey with Texas Railroad Commission chairman Christi Craddick, State Rep. Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi) and Houston Food Bank Board Member Beto Cardenas.

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BULLETIN -- "WASHINGTON (AP) - Trump says senators shouldn't leave town for August recess without action on health care overhaul."

Good Wednesday afternoon. PRESIDENT TRUMP dropped in on the first meeting of the presidential advisory commission on election integrity. Trump slammed states that aren't sending data. The president addressing the commission: "If any state does not want to share this information, one has to wonder what they are worried about. And I ask the vice president, I ask the commission, what are they worried about? There's something. There always is."

-- **@MatthewNussbaum:** "The voter fraud commission will cost \$500,000 -- \$250K this year and next, per VP's office." **Matt's story** <http://politi.co/2vCRETh>

THE PRESIDENT, AND HIS POLICY -- "Trump's wall: The inside story of how the president crafts immigration policy," by WaPo's Ashley Parker, David Nakamura and Phil Rucker: "Trump is torn over how to address the status of the younger immigrants who were brought to the country illegally by their parents, colloquially known as 'Dreamers,' who were protected by President Barack Obama's administration. Debate about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy aimed at this group has been among the most robust - and inconclusive -- in Trump's White House.

"By contrast, Trump is far more certain about the wall. The structure could change in design or function -- he vowed to build a much longer and higher wall during the campaign -- but his security argument for it has remained constant."
<http://wapo.st/2vjvMwR>

DEPT. OF POLITICS -- "Criticize Trump at your peril, Republican candidates. Just ask Kim Guadagno," by the Star Ledger's Matt Arco and Claude Brodesser-Akner: "Already trailing badly in the polls, Republican gubernatorial candidate Kim Guadagno has been hit with another devastating 1-2 punch: She's lost the confidence of a pair of deep-pocketed GOP groups that spend big on governor's races, NJ Advance Media has learned.

"The Republican National Committee, which is controlled by President Donald Trump, views the lieutenant governor as someone who hasn't been loyal to the president and officials there see her race as a losing cause, according to two sources familiar with the RNC's plans. The sources requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. The Republican Governors Association, a nationwide group formed with the sole purpose of electing GOP governors, has invested minimally in New Jersey and currently has no plans to change course, sources say.

"The other hit for Guadagno comes right here in New Jersey, where Gov. Chris Christie's top fundraisers privately say they are sitting out the race because, in part, she's been deemed disloyal to the governor after criticizing him on several issues, including his stay at the governor's beach house during the state shutdown."

<http://bit.ly/2tfDk2k>

SNEAK PEEK -- FROM THE WHITE HOUSE -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:30 a.m.: "I will be having lunch at the White House today with Republican Senators concerning healthcare. They MUST keep their promise to America!" ... **at 8:46 a.m.:** "The Republicans never discuss how good their healthcare bill is, & it will get even better at lunchtime. The Dems scream death as OCare dies!"

-- FOR THE RECORD: Senate Republicans don't expect much to happen at this meeting.

HEAD SNAP -- TRUMP IS ALL OVER THE PLACE -- In the past few days, Trump has suggested several different tactics to deal with the health care law. He said to repeal it now, replace it later. After it failed, he said Republicans should let Obamacare fail and force Democrats to the negotiating table. Today he's signaling he will get with Republicans to make the bill better over lunch.

-- "Top Trump campaign aides met with Lee on health care," by Burgess Everett: "Former Trump campaign aides Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie met with Sen. Mike Lee to talk health care on Tuesday, a source familiar with the conversations confirmed. The two former top Trump campaign officials tried to convince the conservative Utah Republican to reverse course on his opposition to the latest Obamacare replacement bill written by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Lee restated his opposition to the current draft of the bill and his support for his amendment, the Consumer Freedom Act, which was not included. But the conversation was productive, the source said." <http://politi.co/2u9SVDg>

DAVID BRODY'S NEW SHOW: CBN's "FAITH NATION" -- SEAN SPICER SPEAKS! --

BRODY: "Sean, I want to ask you about the press briefings. Do you want to set the record straight a little bit? You were must-see TV. You're like the Seinfeld of TV news, or TV politics. Give us the sense of how you decide there what's going to be on-camera and off-camera. What's the mechanism there?"

SPICER: "There's a lot of factors that go into it every day, David. Obviously, one of the

things that gets overblown as you know, you're here quite often, is that we brief every day. And the question is, I think for some individuals, they want everything on camera every day. As you know today the president is going to have several events on camera. He's going to have the pool involved. So on days he's going to be doing a big event and making major policy initiatives, it's obviously much more important to have the president's voice carry the day. So, we'll engage with reporters throughout the day. One of the things that sometimes people don't appreciate the way that they get it is we are here very early in the morning, we stay very late at night.

"We stay very engaged with the press all day long doing interviews like this, communicating with the press. And we do a briefing every single day. I think for a lot of folks, they're more interested in getting the clip to put on the internet, to put on their news and we're interested in making sure that we communicate with the American people, that we give the press an opportunity to get their questions answered but we're not here to make it a spectacle either. We want to make sure that we do things that are informative and helpful to get the president's message out, to answer the key questions. So on days that he's talking in particular we're going to make sure that we let his voice carry the day." **Link** <http://bit.ly/2uJaUSP>

THE CLUB FOR GROWTH announced that it will make the Senate's upcoming vote on advancing the 2015 repeal bill a key vote for its scorecard and launched a website with Tea Party Patriots slamming Republican senators not backing the bill as "Obamacare repeal traitors." <http://bit.ly/2vCABAM>

CONSEQUENCES? -- "GOP repeal foes face blowback," by Alex Isenstadt and Gabe Debenedetti: "Senior GOP officials spent much of Tuesday surveying the anger and frustration within their own party and taking calls from bitterly disappointed contributors, some of whom threatened to turn off the cash spigot. Senators who refused to support the bill, the party officials predicted, would see their fundraising take an immediate hit. Texas businessman Doug Deason, a Trump backer and the son of billionaire Darwin Deason, said he and other major GOP donors were warming to the idea of funding primary challenges to senators who had opposed the health care bill. There was growing frustration, he said, over the failure to advance the president's agenda.

"In a text message referring to three senators - Sens. Susan Collins, Jeff Flake and Shelley Moore Capito - who played a role in sinking the bill, Deason ripped 'the spineless Republican members from Maine, Arizona and West Virginia who seem to believe that Obamacare is actually succeeding.' He added: 'It will be disappointing to see these three lose their reelection campaigns to Democrats - unless we can find better candidates to run in the primary races against them.'" <http://politi.co/2vCffDn>

THIS IS UNUSUAL -- @ericawerner: "Sen Rubio currently has a three-member security detail. This is not normally the case."

ATTENTION TRAVELERS -- "Mexico says electronic device checks on U.S. flights start today," by CNN's Euan McKirdy and Daniel Silva Fernandez: "Passengers on

flights from Mexico to the United States can expect longer security checks starting Wednesday -- part of a larger U.S. push for extra scrutiny for inbound flights worldwide. Airlines in Mexico will now subject passengers on direct U.S.-bound flights to extra security checks for portable electronic devices larger than a phone, Mexico's civil aviation authority said. ... Devices that passengers take with them into the cabin will be subjected to safety checks and should be presented separately from the rest of the luggage, and without a cover or any other protection, the authority said."

<http://cnn.it/2vCfvm5>

SWAMP CHECK -- "Trump's stark priorities in funding and cutting are keenly felt by federal workforce," by WaPo's Lisa Rein: "Where Trump is putting resources and priorities, many employees describe a sense of validation and optimism. Where he is dismissive of their mission and their value as public servants, they are anxious, discouraged and sometimes hostile. And in offices where the White House envisions severe budget cuts and has set in motion buyouts, early-retirement offers and possible layoffs, civil servants are ill at ease, their futures uncertain. Amid this upheaval, employees have kept the government humming. Social Security checks are still going out, and the Labor Department is still enforcing wage and hourly pay laws. But in some offices, employees say there is little direction from above and few initiatives underway.

"After just six months, it is too early to gauge the impact of the Trump administration's zeal to shrink the size and reach of government. Congress controls not only spending, but also in many cases whether the White House actually can eliminate agencies and programs. But this much seems clear: Across the far flung bureaucracy, employees are either on edge or waiting with high expectations for the change Trump promised, with few, it seems, weighing in at neutral." <http://wapo.st/2vC6wRJ>

POLITICO EUROPE -- "Moscow spooks return to Hungary, raising NATO hackles," by Lili Bayer: "[O]fficials from allied countries say Russia increasingly sees Hungary as an operational backdoor into Europe. 'There is tremendous concern that Russia is basically using Hungary as an intel forward operating base in NATO and the EU,' said a former official at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Western officials say Russian intelligence agencies have boosted their presence over the past few years in Hungary, which is a member of Europe's border-free Schengen zone, to launch a variety of intelligence and sabotage operations in the EU. 'Back in 2014-2015 [the Russians] went from maybe 50-100 intelligence officers up to 300 plus' in Hungary, said the former embassy official." <http://politi.co/2uHP6qA>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- The most competitive California congressional races -- Rahm Emanuel is in Europe <http://politi.co/2vCdfuR>

OUT MAGAZINE has its Power 50 list out, highlighting "individuals who are working to make a positive impact on LGBTQ culture, beyond simply being at the pinnacle of their field/professions." Rachel Maddow, Anderson Cooper, ACLU director Anthony Romero, Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Tim Cook, Deray Mckesson, Reps. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), David Cicilline (D-R.I.) and Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Glenn Greenwald, HRC

president Chad Griffin, Don Lemon and more all make the list <http://bit.ly/2uCKpNK>

NEW SCALIA BOOK -- Crown Forum announced that they're publishing a collection of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's speeches, edited by his youngest son, Christopher Scalia, and Edward Whelan, one of his former clerks. The book is scheduled to be released Oct. 3 and has a foreword from Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. **The release** <http://politi.co/2uCMjxT> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2uCqsXy>

HISTORY LESSON -- CARLOS LOZADA in WaPo, "Samuel Huntington, a prophet for the Trump era": "Huntington, like Trump, wanted America to be great, and came to long for a restoration of values and identity that he believed made the country not just great but a nation apart. However, if that path involves closing ourselves off, demonizing newcomers and demanding cultural fealty, then how different are we, really, from anywhere else? The central agony of the Trump era is that rather than becoming great, America is becoming unexceptional. And that's not a clash of civilizations. It's a civilization crashing." <http://wapo.st/2vBWJer>

MEDIAWATCH -- Wendy Benjaminson has been named the national news editor for beats at the AP. She was most recently interim bureau chief for the AP in D.C.

DESSERT -- "2 new Harry Potter books set to be published in October," from the AP <http://bit.ly/2uCBTyw>

TRANSITIONS -- Kristina Baum, the comms director for the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, will be the new chief spokeswoman for Chevron Phillips Chemical.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - David Stewart, staff director at House Ways and Means, and **Betsy Stewart**, VP at the Business Roundtable, email family and friends: "We're delighted to introduce you to our new daughter, Penelope (Poppy) Shea Stewart. She was born on [Tuesday] at 2:25 p.m. and weighs 7 pounds 7 ounces. Betsy and Poppy are both doing fantastic. And Big Sister Grace is excited and attentive to her baby sister already too." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2uzdAlm>

SPOTTED at last night's home opener for the Washington Kastles, D.C.'s indoor tennis team: Mark and Sally Ein, Matt Dornic, Tammy Haddad, Evan Ryan, Tony Blinken, Phil Deutch, Steve Clemons, Margaret Carlson.

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Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: HICKENLOOPER on White House run with Kasich: You never know -- ANNIE KARNI: WEST WING women are the 'survivors' in Trump WH -- WHAT TRUMP tells people on his golf courses -- SASSE rebuffs Heritage

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Driving the Day

Happy hump day from Denver. **SOME NEWS** -- We asked **COLORADO GOV. JOHN HICKENLOOPER** during a Playbook Exchange event here if he would run for the White House on a ticket with **OHIO REPUBLICAN GOV. JOHN KASICH**. He said: "I don't think Kasich would ever do that ... You never know. You never say. He's an easy person to work with. He's strongly opinionated. And quick to his opinion. But he also knows as much about the federal budget, and understands health care at a deeper level than almost any other governor I know. ... I don't think it's in the cards. But I do like the idea of working with him in some context at some point." The governor told us Trump has told him he's taken notice of his appearances on TV.

-- **WILL HICKENLOOPER RUN AGAINST SEN. CORY GARDNER (R-COLO.)?** He said he was "disappointed" with Gardner's stance on health care. "That's not the Cory Gardner I thought I knew." Hickenlooper said he is "not ruling anything out." When asked what he thinks about when he considers running for a seat in Washington, Hickenlooper joked, "I think why me? What did I do to hurt you?" **Video of the event at S&P Global's Denver office** <http://bit.ly/2ujrpA8>

SPOTTED : Reince Priebus and Anthony Scaramucci both dining Tuesday afternoon at the Lafayette restaurant at the Hay Adams. Reince was with one other person, Scaramucci was with four. They were at separate tables.

READ THIS STORY, about how Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is pushing for a clean debt ceiling increase and, in part, is banking on Democrats to carry it. <http://politi.co/2vs7LXJ>. It's very hard to see how this is not going to be a huge legislative fight in the fall. Conservatives are going to want to notch a legislative

achievement alongside lifting the debt limit. Democrats are out of power in every sense, and will want a clean increase but won't want to be seen as carrying it. The ceiling needs to be lifted by the end of September. Government funding also runs out then. And the White House has said they want to finish tax reform by the end of October.

TOP TALKER -- BEHIND THE CURTAIN -- "Full transcript: Trump's Wall Street Journal interview," by Josh Dawsey and Hadas Gold: "President Donald Trump called his son-in-law a 'good boy' while thanking Wall Street Journal editor-in-chief Gerard Baker for a positive editorial about Jared Kushner and said the leader of the Boy Scouts told him his jamboree speech was 'the greatest speech ever made to them.' The comments, made to The Wall Street Journal and obtained in a transcript by POLITICO, show Trump holding forth at length with Baker and engaging in a familiar back and forth. Baker, according to the transcript, asked many of the questions and took the lead byline on the main piece about the interview as well, an unusual step for the editor in chief of a paper with a large White House reporting staff. The Journal has not published a full transcript of the interview. ...

"Matt Murray, the Journal's deputy editor-in-chief, warned staffers in a conference call in recent days about leaking the transcript, saying it would be a breach of trust, according to several sources familiar with the call. 'Damn right I told them that. It's true,' Murray said on Tuesday via a Journal spokesperson. According to the transcript, Ivanka Trump stopped by the Oval Office during the interview, telling Baker she heard he was there and wanted to say hello. ... Baker told Ivanka Trump, 'It was nice to see you out in Southampton a couple weeks ago,' an apparent reference to a party thrown last month attended by many politicians, business titans and media elites thrown by Washington Post heiress Lally Weymouth ... Ivanka Trump and Baker also chatted about their daughters, both named Arabella." ***With the full transcript*** <http://politi.co/2vhPWKC>

BREAKING -- EARLY LEAD FOR DEMOCRATS -- NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: Democrats surge ahead on generic ballot," by Steven Shepard: "Republicans trail Democrats by 7 percentage points on the generic congressional ballot, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll, the Democratic Party's greatest advantage on the generic ballot since the poll began asking the question this past spring.

"The survey, conducted last Thursday through Saturday, shows a generic Democrat leading a generic Republican, 44 percent to 37 percent, with 19 percent of registered voters undecided. The two parties were tied, 40 percent apiece, in the previous week's poll." <http://politi.co/2uiOgMm>

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- THE PRESIDENT will announce a legal immigration overhaul with Sens. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and David Perdue (R-Ga.). He'll also meet with Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) in the afternoon.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE in Montenegro made brief remarks to the pool. Per WaPo's Ashley Parker, Pence said: "As you mentioned, NATO is made up of large

countries and small countries, but the United States of America has no small ally."

NEXT UP -- "U.S. Plans Trade Measures Against China," by WSJ's Jake Schlesinger and Bob Davis: "The Trump administration is planning trade measures to force Beijing to crack down on intellectual-property theft and ease requirements that American companies share advanced technologies to gain entry to the Chinese market. The administration is considering invoking a little-used provision of U.S. trade law to investigate whether China's intellectual-property policies constitute 'unfair trade practices,' according to people familiar with the matter. That would pave the way for the U.S. to impose sanctions on Chinese exporters or to further restrict the transfer of advanced technology to Chinese firms or to U.S.-China joint ventures. ...

"One big question hanging over the White House review is whether the administration pursues any complaint through the World Trade Organization, or whether it chooses to impose penalties on its own without first seeking permission from the international body, which some Trump advisers have argued is incapable of dealing with China's trade practices. Trump aides have regularly vowed to pursue a more unilateral approach to trade but have so far done little along those lines. It is unclear how long the administration's internal review will take before an announcement is made. Officials at one point had signaled that an announcement could come as soon as this week."

<http://on.wsj.com/2vrtXB6>

-- ANDREW RESTUCCIA and DOUG PALMER: "Trump's aides have been deeply divided on trade, with top trade adviser Peter Navarro and chief strategist Steve Bannon calling for aggressive measures even as others like National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn have urged caution. But an administration official said the decision to launch a Section 301 investigation won broad support among the president's ideologically diverse staff." <http://politi.co/2uiKpi2>

MONEY CHASE -- AP'S JULIE BYKOWICZ: "Trump's fundraising prowess is the engine of the [RNC] and a lifeline for every Republican planning to rely on the party for financial help during next year's congressional races. Leaning heavily on Trump's appeal among small donors, the party has raised \$75 million in the first six months of the year, more than double what the [DNC] had raised by the same point in President Barack Obama's first year." <http://bit.ly/2wl5F8v>

DRAIN THE SWAMP! -- "Trump Loyalist Mixes Businesses and Access at 'Advisory' Firm," by NYT's Nick Confessore and Ken Vogel: "Mr. Lewandowski started his new business, Lewandowski Strategic Advisors, in May, according to corporate documents filed in Delaware, eight days after he announced he would part ways with the Washington lobbying firm he helped found, Avenue Strategies. Mr. Lewandowski has recently discussed expanding the new firm by adding, among others, two more Trump insiders -- the former Trump deputy campaign manager David Bossie and George Gigicos, who stepped down Monday as Mr. Trump's White House advance director -- according to two associates.

"Among the first new clients of Lewandowski Strategic Advisors is an Ohio-based company called Community Choice Financial. The company is a leader in the payday lending industry, which has faced heightened federal scrutiny in recent years. ... Mr. Lewandowski, who is known for his keen understanding of Mr. Trump's news media tastes and habits, used an appearance on NBC's 'Meet the Press' on Sunday to press his new client's interests, calling for Mr. Trump to oust the bureau's director, Richard Cordray, an Obama holdover who has led the effort to pass new payday lending requirements. ... Rejecting a question from the 'Meet the Press' host, Chuck Todd, about whether he had 'a client that wants to see' Mr. Cordray fired, Mr. Lewandowski said: 'No, no. I have no clients whatsoever.'" <http://nyti.ms/2vrccQt>

THE LATEST ON HEALTH CARE ...

-- "Republicans in Congress Bypass Trump to Shore Up Health Law," by NYT's Robert Pear and Thomas Kaplan: "Congressional Republicans moved on Tuesday to defuse President Trump's threat to cut off critical payments to health insurance companies, maneuvering around the president toward bipartisan legislation to shore up insurance markets under the Affordable Care Act. Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the influential chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, announced that his panel would begin work in early September on legislation to 'stabilize and strengthen the individual health insurance market' for 2018.

...

"In the House, two Republicans, Representatives Tom Reed of New York and Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, teamed with Democrats to promote incremental health legislation that would also fund the cost-sharing subsidies. The moves were a remarkable response to the president's repeated threats to send health insurance markets into a tailspin. They offered tangible indications of cooperation between the parties after Republican efforts to scrap the Affordable Care Act collapsed in the Senate last week, all but ending the seven-year Republican quest to overturn President Barack Obama's signature domestic achievement. Lawmakers from both parties concede that the health law needs improvement, as consumers face sharp premium increases and a shrinking number of insurance options in many states." <http://nyti.ms/2f7tMEj>

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TOP-EDS -- LANHEE CHEN and TEVI TROY in the WASHINGTON POST: "How Republicans can fix Obamacare now": "On the legislative front, there are several rifle-shot provisions that could be attached to must-pass pieces of legislation, such as continued funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that medical liability reform could save almost \$50 billion over 10 years. And allowing the purchase of insurance across state lines would help expand insurance markets, consequently, improving options for consumers in states burdened by heavy insurance mandates. Republicans could also eliminate the Independent

Payment Advisory Board, a government body that has drawn bipartisan criticism for the extraordinary power it has to make significant cuts to the Medicare program."

<http://wapo.st/2vhxotW>

-- SEN. JAMES LANKFORD (R-Okla.) in the WSJ, "How To Make The Senate Work Again: Keep The Filibuster But Change Other Rules That Promote Delay": "How do we get the Senate working again? First, we should reduce floor debate time for executive nominees from 30 hours to eight or less. The Senate could debate and vote on five or more nominees a week, instead of just one or two. Interestingly, this rule change was adopted for a short time by the Senate in 2013, under Harry Reid, as part of a temporary agreement to fill nominations. It worked then, and it would work now. Second, we should lower the vote threshold on the 'motion to proceed,' which begins legislative debate and amendment consideration, from 60 votes to 51." <http://on.wsj.com/2w4oxZT>

IF YOU READ ONE THING -- ANNIE KARNI: "In Trump's White House, the women are the survivors": "Kellyanne Conway's office has a different vibe than other corners of the West Wing. Unlike some of the drab work spaces belonging to her male counterparts, whose offices look as impersonal as the day they moved in, Conway's office is decorated with colorfully framed, oversized family photos mounted on the walls and a copy of Ivanka Trump's book 'Women Who Work' prominently on display. The comfy digs are a sign that Conway, the White House counselor who recently has been keeping a lower profile, is planning on being here for the long haul - even though some of her colleagues, including chief strategist Steve Bannon and recently departed chief of staff Reince Priebus, have at times tried to cut her out of the information loop.

"Meanwhile, former colleagues like Priebus, Anthony Scaramucci, Sean Spicer, Michael Flynn, Michael Dubke, Michael Short and Boris Epshteyn have been fired, or simply resigned to save themselves. Even Bannon, according to multiple people close to President Donald Trump, has been the target of the president's recent frustrations and anger, and he has been trying to lower his genius-behind-the-throne profile in order to avoid sharing Priebus' unhappy fate. Conway, however, is not alone in surviving the snakepit. The quiet endurers of Trump's tumultuous White House, by and large, are the women who serve in his administration. That fact that may seem ironic in an administration run by a man who has launched sexist attacks on everyone from morning show host Mika Brzezinski to his former campaign opponent Hillary Clinton - and who in the past has been accused by more than a dozen women of groping or kissing them against their will.

"But the women of the West Wing, at least so far, have had the more stable ride. is not alone. Former Goldman Sachs partner Dina Powell has risen in the ranks to become deputy national security adviser. She was also on the final shortlist of people Trump was considering for the chief of staff job given to retired Gen. John Kelly, according to two White House officials. It was Powell, alongside U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who was invited to ride in Trump's car, known as 'The Beast,' from the White House to Andrews Air Force Base last Friday, hours before the president unceremoniously fired Priebus in the rain. Communications adviser Hope Hicks maintains an unassailable position as a

surrogate family member and loyal aide by the president's side, where she has stood since before there was even a campaign. Sarah Huckabee Sanders has risen to the position of press secretary, after Spicer resigned because he was not given the full control of the communications department that he demanded." <http://politi.co/2wkSaFV>

TRIAL BALLOON - "Kelly eyes DHS spokesman for communications director, sources say," by CNN's Dylan Byers: "[Dave] Lapan, who has worked with Kelly for over a decade, is at the top of a short list to serve as the White House's top official on messaging and communications. He would take the position formerly held by Anthony Scaramucci. Kelly's interest in Lapan suggests that he is as eager to impose discipline on the White House messaging strategy as he is to impose order on the chaotic and fractious West Wing. Lapan has a background that, like Kelly's, is steeped in years of military experience. Before DHS, he led press operations at the Defense Department and the Marine Corps. Reached for comment, Lapan told CNNMoney he had not spoken to Kelly or anyone else at the White House about the position." <http://cnnmon.ie/2tYnp8R>

-- **REPORTERS WE SPOKE TO** said this would be a good hire for the White House. He respects the media and the job that journalists do.

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS -- "Sasse rebuffs Heritage for top job," by Eliana Johnson: "The Heritage Foundation has approached one of the Senate's leading anti-Trump Republicans, Ben Sasse, to gauge his interest in serving as president - an indication the influential conservative think tank may turn away from its supportive posture toward the president. Sasse, who was elected to his first term in the Senate in 2014, has swatted down the overtures from Heritage's board of trustees, according to two sources familiar with the recruitment effort. The Nebraska senator rose to national prominence when he announced early in the primary calendar that he would support neither Donald Trump nor Hillary Clinton, and he has been a persistent critic of Trump ever since." <http://politi.co/2vmrIDU>

-- **"Senior [EPA] official quits, decrying 'triumph of myth over truth,'"** by E&E's Ariel Wittenberg: "Elizabeth 'Betsy' Southerland worked at EPA for 30 years, most recently directing the Office of Water's Office of Science and Technology. Southerland slammed Pruitt's EPA for launching a 'repeal, replace, modify initiative' for regulations. ... She also described President Trump's executive order requiring that agencies repeal two regulations for every new one as 'a real Sophie's choice for public health agencies like EPA.' She said, 'Should EPA repeal two existing rules protecting infants from neurotoxins in order to promulgate a new rule protecting adults from a newly discovered liver toxin?'" <http://bit.ly/2uUBCGP> ... **Her exit memo** <http://bit.ly/2vi4k5h>

M.I.A. -- "Trump's CEO Brain Trust Comes Up Short on Big Ideas for Policies," by Bloomberg's Matt Townsend, Shannon Pettypiece and Joe Deaux: "Elon Musk of Tesla and Walt Disney's Bob Iger have quit. Jeffrey Immelt of General Electric and JPMorgan Chase's Jamie Dimon have dissented. President Donald Trump's business brain trust -- originally these executives, plus some 50 other chief executive officers chosen to help

shape White House policy -- has so far come up short on big ideas. In fact, there's been little activity for the strategic and policy forum and the manufacturing group, according to people familiar with the matter who asked not to be identified. After initial meetings early in Trump's presidency -- which the White House promoted with great fanfare -- his administration hasn't convened the groups for months or set firm dates for future meetings." <https://bloom.bg/2u2MRhw>

DOJ WATCH -- "Sessions offers rare warning on dangers of police misconduct," by Josh Gerstein: "As Attorney General Jeff Sessions delivered his usual recitation of the ills of violence and drugs plaguing America Tuesday, he added in a problem he rarely brings up unprompted: police misconduct. Sessions often chastises others for badmouthing police and, indeed, his remarks to an African-American law enforcement group in Atlanta, included just such a passage. But what was more notable was his public acknowledgment that 'bad' officers were contributing to a lack of community trust.

"We all know the cases of the last several years when in confrontations with police, lives have been cut short,' Sessions told the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives conference. 'Just as I'm committed to defending law enforcement who lawfully have to use deadly force to defend themselves while engaged in their work, I will also use the power of the office I'm entrusted with to hold any officer responsible who violates the law.' 'You know all it takes is for one bad officer to destroy the reputations of so many who work every day to build good relationships in these communities and who serve with honor and distinction,' Sessions added." <http://politi.co/2u2saCl>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Justice Dept. to Take On Affirmative Action in College Admissions ," by NYT's Charlie Savage: "The Trump administration is preparing to redirect resources of the Justice Department's civil rights division toward investigating and suing universities over affirmative action admissions policies deemed to discriminate against white applicants, according to a document obtained by The New York Times. The document, an internal announcement to the civil rights division, seeks current lawyers interested in working for a new project on 'investigations and possible litigation related to intentional race-based discrimination in college and university admissions.'" <http://nyti.ms/2w4WRUH>

THE JUICE ...

-- **CALIFORNIA REP. BARBARA LEE** is being reappointed by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to the post of House Democratic Representative to the United Nations, POLITICO California Playbook author Carla Marinucci writes in. The dedicated anti-war activist has made news recently with her effort to repeal the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force.

FUN READ - "'The moment when it really started to feel insane': An oral history of the Scaramucci era," by WaPo's Monica Hesse, Ben Terris and Dan Zak: ***With cameos from Matt Schlapp, Max Boot, Sens. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Tim Scott (R-S.C.), and***

Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Tommy Vietor, Eli Stokols, Sarah McBride, Henry Gomez, Olivia Nuzzi, Evan McMorris-Santoro, Yashar Ali, Ben Wikler, Kat Timpf.

<http://wapo.st/2vmPCcO>

Playbook Reads

TRUMP'S COST CUTTING -- "Boeing Jets Once Destined for Russian Carrier to Be Next Air Force One: Planes will be converted as part of an effort to cut the cost of replacement program," by WSJ's Doug Cameron: "The U.S. will buy two 747 jumbo jets from Boeing Co. for use as the next Air Force One fleet, converting planes previously ordered by a bankrupt Russian airline. Boeing suggested selling the planes as part of an effort to cut the cost of an Air Force One replacement program that President Donald Trump criticized as too expensive before taking office. 'We're working through the final stages of coordination to purchase two commercial 747-8 aircraft and expect to award a contract soon,' Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek said on Tuesday."

<http://on.wsj.com/2vnC1C3>

REMEMBER HIM? -- "Prosecutors inappropriately inquired about ex-congressman Aaron Schock's sex life, defense attorneys say," by WaPo's Matt Zapotsky:

"Defense attorneys for former congressman Aaron Schock (R-Ill.) have asked a federal judge to dismiss the criminal charges against him, arguing in a court filing Tuesday that investigators acted inappropriately in the case, including by exploring Schock's sex life and whether he was gay.

"Schock's defense attorneys asserted that prosecutors made 'repeated inquiries to witnesses into who he has slept with and whether he is gay,' questioning at least a dozen witnesses on the topic of Schock's sexuality, his relationships and his sleeping arrangements. The attorneys argued the inquiries were so inappropriate that they could have affected witnesses who testified before the grand jury, and thus the indictment against Schock should be thrown out. 'The government's inquiries into Mr. Schock's sexuality and romantic relationships were not just distasteful and offensive,' Schock's attorneys wrote. 'They were prejudicial.' A spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Central District of Illinois, which is prosecuting the case, declined to comment. ...

"The government has investigated nearly every facet of Mr. Schock's professional, political, and personal life,' defense attorneys wrote. 'This even includes his sex life. It is no secret that there has long been speculative gossip in the media about Mr. Schock's sexual orientation. For no apparent reason, the government has felt itself compelled to investigate this too.'" <http://wapo.st/2hmeYCr>

OUT GOLFING -- "First Golfer: Donald Trump's relationship with golf has never been more complicated," by Alan Shipnuck in Sports Illustrated: "At most other golf courses in America the TV is tuned to Golf Channel, on mute, but throughout last

summer and fall, the television in Trump Bedminster's shop was on Fox News, with the sound blaring. As President, Trump has already made four visits to the club. He has his own cottage adjacent to the pool; it was recently given a secure perimeter by the Secret Service, leading to the inevitable joke that it's the only wall Trump has successfully built. Chatting with some members before a recent round of golf, he explained his frequent appearances: 'That White House is a real dump.' (A White House spokesperson denies this occurred.) ...

"Trump favors the latest in TaylorMade equipment, owing to a long-standing friendship with Mark King, the company's former CEO. But when Prime Minister Abe gave Trump a gold-colored Honma Beres S-05 driver, it went straight into the bag. (Retail price of the club: \$3,755. The gift was made in November, and as President-elect, Trump was permitted to accept a gift that he would not have been allowed to take after the inauguration; Presidents are forbidden from accepting a present from a foreign government with a value that exceeds \$390.) ... A Wall Street banker and member of a Trump club with knowledge of the financing of the \$63 million Turnberry [Scotland] purchase expects the deal to be a subject of interest to special prosecutor Robert Mueller, given the foreign lenders he says were involved. ...

"[F]or the President, politics and golf are now inextricably linked. During the [U.S. Women's] Open, one of the few players to enjoy an audience with him was Sandra Gal, a member of the European Solheim Cup team from Germany. He quizzed her about the speed of the greens, thickness of the rough and other details about how his course was playing. 'I asked him how he was doing,' Gal says, 'and he said, "This Russia stuff is nasty business. Much nastier than trying to make a three-foot putt.'" <http://bit.ly/2f77ouA>

MUELLER'S MUSCLE -- "Former Justice Department official joins Mueller team," by Reuters' Karen Freifeld: "Greg Andres started on Tuesday, becoming the 16th lawyer on the team, said Josh Stueve, a spokesman for the special counsel. Most recently a white-collar criminal defense lawyer with New York law firm Davis Polk & Wardwell, Andres, 50, served at the Justice Department from 2010 to 2012. He was deputy assistant attorney general in the criminal division, where he oversaw the fraud unit and managed the program that targeted illegal foreign bribery." <http://reut.rs/2f7slQC>

-- "Wife of new Mueller prosecutor just bailed as judge in 2 Trump cases," by Josh Gerstein: <http://politi.co/2uXM6Uo>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley :** Millennial investors are bringing increased attention to sustainable, responsible and impact investing-and it may be creating opportunities for investors of all ages. [Read more](#) about new sustainable investing portfolios with lower account minimums from Morgan Stanley. *****

THE MOOCH TALKS TO HUFFPO -- "Why The Mooch Lost His Cool," by HuffPost's Vicky Ward: "Scaramucci said he felt burned by the [Lizza] interview. 'The Lizzas and Scaramuccis have been friends for over 50 years. My dad knew his dad from construction, and we were building a personal relationship. Most of what I said was

humorous and joking. Legally, it may have been on the record, but the spirit of it was off. And he knew that.' Still, Scaramucci told me, he has plans to take Lizza out for a beer. When I asked Lizza for his response, he wrote back: 'I've only known Anthony in his capacity as a Trump surrogate and then White House communications director. We are not and have never been 'old family friends,' though I think our fathers knew each other, so maybe that's what he's talking about. (The Long Island Italian world in that generation is relatively small.) But again, that would not be a reason to suppress an explosive on-the-record interview.'" <http://bit.ly/2vmunrY>

FOR JARED -- "What Kushner's Leaked Speech Gets Wrong About Mideast

Peace: The president's son in law thinks he knows better than the peace processors who came before him. He's about to get a rude awakening," by Aaron David Miller in POLITICO Magazine: "While he says he always tries to 'We don't want a history lesson. We've read enough books.' I know how frustrating the past can be in Mideast peace talks: It's where the parties retreat, far too often blinded by their own claims and grievances, which seem to hold the future hostage. But for a would-be peacemaker, if you ignore history it will bury you. Israeli and Palestinian officials can overwhelm you with intricate stories about which patch of land belonged to whom when and who double-crossed whom in previous negotiating rounds. You don't need to be a historian to be a successful negotiator, but knowing which gripes matter and which ones don't is crucial." <http://politi.co/2wkigNr>

--**"Trump's Peace Envoy Expands His Team,"** by Haaretz's Amir Tibon: "The Trump administration is working to staff up Jason Greenblatt's team to support his peace efforts. The most recent addition: Victoria Coates, a former foreign policy adviser to Senator Ted Cruz." <http://bit.ly/2uUJDvy>

VALLEY TALK - NICK BILTON in Vanity Fair, "Inside Travis Kalanick's Fight to Retake Uber": "Kalanick ... is probably the most aggressive and relentless C.E.O. that I have personally ever spent time with. And weeks after being ousted from Uber ... he is trying to stage his own comeback. ... After speaking with more than half-a-dozen people close to Kalanick and Uber's board of directors, it appears to me the jilted C.E.O. is up for the fight. ... Everyone I spoke to about Kalanick, however, told me that he is unequivocally trying to manipulate a return to the company in an operations role. (He currently sits on its board.) ... According to Kara Swisher at Recode, Kalanick prefers to liken his own potential homecoming to Jobs's epic return to Apple, with Kalanick telling people he is 'Steve Jobs-ing it.' Aaron Sorkin, get your typewriter ready!" <http://bit.ly/2tYaqEi>

MEDIAWATCH - per Alex Weprin in Morning Media: "The latest round of buyouts and layoffs at The New York Times will cost the company \$25 million, according to a Times filing with the SEC on Tuesday."

-- **JAMES CLAPPER**, former director of national intelligence, is now a CNN contributor. (h/t Hadas Gold's Morning Media)

LATE NIGHT BEST -- SEN. AL FRANKEN (D-Minn.) was on **"THE LATE SHOW"** with **STEPHEN COLBERT**. Franken talks about which senators are funny -- **video**

<http://bit.ly/2uj98mv>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Sebastian Gorka enjoying a cold beer last night at Hawk 'n' Dove - "Zinke was ... enjoying some wings," per our tipster - **pic** <http://politi.co/2wjZLEE> ... Anthony Scaramucci last night leaving the Trump Hotel "with sunglasses on and suitcase in hand. He was picked up by a black SUV hired car," per our tipster.

ANDREA MITCHELL is celebrating her 39th year at NBC News this week.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Alison Schneider, comms director of Locust Street Group and husband **Andrew Shult**, digital coordinator for Whip Scalise and an Issa/OGR alum, welcomed baby boy Cameron Burnley Schneider Shult on Tuesday.

Pic <http://politi.co/2tXTuNZ>

TRANSITIONS - Edelman hired **Matt Bracken**, formerly of the Baltimore Sun, as the deputy editorial director of the firm's storytelling team as well as **Melanie Trotman**, a WSJ alum, as a VP and senior editor on the same team. ... **Amanda Hunter** has been hired as communications director for the Barbara Lee Family Foundation in Boston. She most recently worked as director of marketing and comms at the Phillips Collection.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- Sarah Bloom Raskin, former deputy Treasury secretary, has joined Duke University as a Rubenstein Fellow. "Raskin will collaborate across the university to improve understanding of markets, regulation and public leadership ... [and] will guest lecture in courses across the university, advise students and participate in public events." She is married to Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.).

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: New Yorker staff writer **Lawrence Wright**, author of "Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief" and "The Looming Tower" (Hugh Hewitt's favorite book). **How he's celebrating:** "My Austin-based blues band, WhoDo, is meeting me in New York, and we're playing [tonight] ... at Hill Country Brooklyn. I'll be singing an old Bob Wills song, 'Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age.'" Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2vnzZSI>

BIRTHDAYS: AP alum Tom Raum is 73 ... former Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.) is 95 ... Stephen Cox, deputy associate attorney general, is 4-0 ... NYT's Matthew Rosenberg, also a CNN national security analyst (hat tip: Katherine Finnerty) ... Patrick Ruffini, co-founder of Echelon Insights and chairman and founder of digital agency Engage, is 39 ... Rep. Jacklyn Rosen (D-Nev.) is 60 ... Rich Edson of Fox News (h/ts Blair and Josh) ... Hearst Television's Eric Meyrowitz ... former Treasury Secretary John Snow is 78 ...

Kate Roberts ... Politico alum Benton Ives, now living in the Netherlands ... Gigi Kellett of Corporate Accountability International ... former Rep. Dan Boren (D-Okla.) is 44 ... former Rep. Nancy Boyda (D-Kans.) is 62 ... former Rep. Ron De Lugo (R-VI) is 87 ... Peter Mihalick ... Robert Oakley Seibert ... Emily Gershon ... Sarah Bittleman ... Colleen Gallagher ...

... **Caitlin Huey-Burns** of Real Clear Politics ... Jeff Ballou, president of the National Press Club ... Seng Peng of Cardno Emerging Markets, celebrating in Berlin ... Kevin Walling, who heads up the new digital operation at Hamburger Gibson Creative and was recently named a rising star by Campaigns and Elections, is 32 (h/ts John McCarthy and Anne Schroeder) ... Austin Laufersweiler, press secretary for Jason Kander and Let America Vote, is 26 (h/t Mitchell Rivard) ... Daniele Baierlein, director of development at the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City (h/t Jon Haber) ... political consultant Dave Mills ... Paul Cheshire ... Vonda Marrow ... Michael Manganiello ... Gil Duran, SVP for media at Fenton ... Brian D. Montgomery ... Brynn Barnett, principal at HillPoint Strategies ... attorney Sim Khan, founder of custom-suit maker Brimble & Clark ... Dan Burrows ... Jennifer Streaks ... Sean Butler is 52 ... Bryce Dustman ... Melissa Leebaert ... Nehemiah Persoff is 98 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... David Hunter ... Vicki Seyfert ... Brendan O'Sullivan ... Ann Kelly (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley** : According to Morgan Stanley research, 86% of Millennials-broadly defined as those born between the early 1980s and 2000-say they are interested in sustainable investing. They are also twice as likely to invest in a stock or a fund if sustainability is part of the value-creation thesis. With Millennials on track to become the largest demographic in America-by 2020, one in three U.S. adults will be a Millennial-the growing interest in sustainable, responsible and impact investing cannot be ignored. However, most sustainable investing opportunities cater to individuals with significant wealth, while the next generation is still in its early earning years. The growing demand for impact investing solutions is driving change, and opportunities created with reduced account minimums for this audience are benefiting investors of all ages. [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

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To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Mon 5/7/2018 8:07:44 PM
Subject: News Clips - 7 May 2018

(Full stories, highlights, and details are listed further down in the email, and can be jumped to by clicking on any of the links below.)

Administrator Pruitt Coverage

[Daily Caller - Media Take Aim At Trump's EPA For Doing What Obama Used To Do With FOIAs](#)

[CNN - EPA gives Congress limited justifications for Pruitt's first-class travel](#)

[Politico - EPA clamps down on document requests linked to Pruitt](#)

[New York Times - E.P.A. Emails Show an Effort to Shield Pruitt From Public Scrutiny](#)

[Daily Caller - EXCLUSIVE: Scott Pruitt's Head Bodyguard Takes On The 'False Dirty Laundry' Being Spread About EPA \[VIDEO\]](#)

[Politico - White House mum on status of Pruitt review](#)

[The Hill - CNN panel breaks down laughing while discussing Pruitt allegations](#)

Politico - The man who could replace Scott Pruitt

The Hill - Upheaval at Pruitt's EPA as departures mount

Politico - Couple who rented condo to Pruitt pays fine to D.C.

General

Daily Caller - GOP Lawmakers Target 'Tool Of Tyranny' EPA Used To Kill Mining

Washington Examiner - The EPA's new 'secret science' rule makes sense from a risk-assessment perspective

Reuters - Major automakers urge Trump not to freeze fuel economy targets

Reuters - Illinois to sue EPA for exempting Foxconn plant from pollution controls

BNA - Industry Heated as EPA Stays Silent on Global Coolant Deal

The Spokesman-Review - EPA declines to test air downwind of lead smelter in British Columbia

AP - EPA requests new contamination testing at Michigan tannery

E&E Greenwire - Agency employees, Jeff Bezos up for government 'Oscars'

+++

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/05/07/media-trump-epa-foia/>

Media Take Aim At Trump's EPA For Doing What Obama Used To Do With FOIAs

By Chris White, 5/7/18, 1:10 PM

Politico buried crucial context in a report Sunday about the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to screen more thoroughly public records requests related to the embattled administrator Scott Pruitt.

The report suggests the EPA is scrutinizing Freedom of Information requests seeking information about Pruitt. The fact that the agency enacted a similar review process under former President Barack Obama is not mentioned in Politico's article until several paragraphs down.

FOIA experts claim the EPA ratcheted up its vetting process during the first year of the Trump-era, according to Politico. "This does look like the most burdensome review process that I've seen documented," Nate Jones, director of the FOIA Project at George Washington University, told Politico.

The new process, according to internal emails Politico obtained, involve “awareness reviews” or “senior management reviews” political staffers conducted before the agency releases essentially any documents. Pruitt’s political appointees also chastised employees who released documents without having them screened first, according to the Politico report.

This is not the first time the EPA has been roiled in a scandal involving FOIA requests. The agency granted fee waivers in 2012-2013 for 75 out of 82 requests filed by environmental groups, according to EPA records obtained the Competitive Enterprise Institute in May 2013. Obama’s EPA denied only seven of them — meaning green groups saw their fees waived 92 percent of the time.

At the same time, the agency frequently denied fee waivers to conservative groups. EPA records show the agency rejected or ignored 21 out of 26 fee waiver requests from such conservative groups as the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the Institute for Energy Research, and Judicial Watch — an 81 percent rejection rate.

The Politico report comes after various media outlets revealed that Pruitt allegedly spent big on first-class travel. The New York Times published a report in April, for instance, suggesting at least five EPA officials were placed on leave for opposing spending requests on proposals such as a \$100,000-a-month private jet membership.

Pruitt also reportedly racked up nearly \$90,000 in-flight expenses in June 2017. He traveled to Italy in June for meetings at the Vatican and to attend a summit with international energy ministers, CBS noted in a Feb. 13 report. The round-trip business-class flight cost at least \$7,000, according to the report. Career bureaucrats at the EPA are joining in the barrage.

CNN

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/07/politics/epa-pruitt-memos-waivers-first-class/index.html>

EPA gives Congress limited justifications for Pruitt's first-class travel

By Sara Ganim and Gregory Wallace, 5/7/18, 2:36 PM

Washington (CNN) - Documents provided to Congress fail to show Scott Pruitt got federally required waivers to fly first class -- and if he did, then his office has twice declined to hand them over to fellow Republicans asking for the verification.

Instead, in response to two requests for the waivers, the Environmental Protection Agency provided investigators with only two memos, according to the House Oversight Committee.

CNN separately obtained the memos, which state that people have recognized Pruitt and the occasional "lashing out from passengers" could "endanger his life" if he continues to fly in coach.

The limited nature of the two memos, along with a past claim by his spokesman, suggests the EPA administrator violated federal rules by failing to obtain a justification for the upgrades before each trip.

The EPA has previously defended Pruitt's travel and security arrangements, but did not respond to questions from CNN about the memos or whether Pruitt obtained the required waivers.

Pruitt had been asked twice -- in February and April -- by House Oversight Chairman Trey Gowdy, a fellow Republican, to provide any waivers exempting him from regulations requiring federal employees to typically fly in standard coach seats.

The two memos were part of 1,700 pages of documents turned over at the request of South Carolina's Gowdy. The documents include vouchers for all of Pruitt's official travel since he was confirmed and for EPA, vouchers for staff who went on international trips to Italy and Morocco, emails regarding Pruitt's lease of a room from a lobbyist's wife, and EPA correspondence between that lobbyist and other employees of his firm.

In addition, Gowdy's office was able to review travel vouchers for members of Pruitt's security detail, according to his office.

The flights are among several alleged ethical transgressions or questionable spending practices that have landed Pruitt in the spotlight of multiple investigative bodies, including Gowdy's committee, the EPA inspector general, and the Government Accountability Office.

Gowdy's request for the waivers was prompted by a Politico article from February in which EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said Pruitt was granted a "blanket waiver" to travel in first class for security reasons.

The next day, Wilcox's story changed. Politico reported that federal regulations specifically prohibit "blanket authorization, and Wilcox changed his statement, saying a waiver was submitted "for every trip."

While the EPA has not provided detailed waivers, it has handed over more than 1,700 pages of documents in response to multiple requests relating to Pruitt's travel habits, unprecedented security, and sweetheart condo deal from an energy lobbyist, according to Gowdy's office.

But one memo indicates there was only one request for a waiver. It's dated May 1, 2017, and is a request from the acting security chief that Pruitt "be strategically seated in business and or first class seating when on official travel."

"We have observed and (sic) increased awareness and at times lashing out from passengers which occurs while the Administrator is seated in coach with PSD (Protective Services Detail) not easily accessible to him due to uncontrolled full flights," the memo reads.

"Therefore, we believe that the continued use of coach seats for the Administrator would endanger his life," the memo continues.

The second memo is a response from Acting Controller Jeanne Conklin, whose office oversees compliance with spending regulations.

Conklin wrote she "determined your request complies with criteria" for allowing first or business class seats, and pointed the Administrator's office to a specific paragraph of government travel regulations.

That paragraph states upgraded travel is allowed if "use of coach-class accommodations would endanger your life or Government property."

That regulation also requires the justification for upgraded seats be prepared for each trip.

"Blanket authorization of other than coach-class transportation accommodations is prohibited and shall be authorized on an individual trip-by-trip basis, unless the traveler has an up-to-date documented disability or special need," the regulation reads.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/06/pruitt-epa-document-requests-570289>

EPA clamps down on document requests linked to Pruitt

By Alex Guillen, 5/6/18, 6:48 AM

Top aides to Scott Pruitt at the Environmental Protection Agency are screening public records requests related to the embattled administrator, slowing the flow of information released under

the Freedom of Information Act — at times beyond what the law allows.

Internal emails obtained by POLITICO show that Pruitt's political appointees reviewed documents collected for most or all FOIA requests regarding his activities, even as he's drawn scrutiny for his use of first-class flights and undisclosed dealings with lobbyists.

While past administrations have given similar heads-ups to political aides for certain records requests, FOIA experts say this high-level vetting at EPA appears to have increased compared with the Obama era.

"This does look like the most burdensome review process that I've seen documented," said Nate Jones, director of the FOIA Project at The George Washington University's National Security Archive.

The emails also show Pruitt's aides chastising career employees who released documents about the administrator without letting them screen the records first. Meanwhile, several environmental groups say the agency has told them that political staffers' document reviews have delayed releases past legal deadlines.

The new processes described in the emails involve "awareness reviews" or "senior management reviews" conducted by top political staffers before the agency releases essentially any documents involving the administrator. The emails also show Pruitt's political appointees chastising career employees who released documents in accordance with FOIA without letting them screen the records first.

EPA sometimes conducted those types of reviews under the Obama administration when career staff thought documents would generate a lot of interest, agency officials from that era told POLITICO. But under Pruitt, the vetting by EPA chief of staff Ryan Jackson and other key appointees of any documents linked to the administrator appears to be on the rise, according to FOIA experts who reviewed the emails.

The increased scrutiny comes as the agency faces a wave of accusations of excessive secrecy.

EPA has declined to provide information about Pruitt's public appearances in advance — a practice at odds with those of many other Cabinet members and the White House. And the agency releases his detailed calendars only when compelled by lawsuits.

That secrecy has prompted a boom in FOIA requests filed with the agency and lawsuits challenging its resistance to releasing information to the public. As POLITICO reported in February, production of documents under FOIA requests from Pruitt's office is drastically lower than the rest of EPA.

The newly released emails, which EPA gave to the Natural Resources Defense Council following legal action, show Jackson created a pilot program to “centralize” requests that go through the various suboffices that make up EPA's Office of the Administrator. The emails show that the political aides weren't just concerned about streamlining the FOIA process — they wanted to know about any requests anywhere at EPA that involved Pruitt.

In one exchange from last August, Jackson and Liz Bowman, the head of EPA's Office of Public Affairs, expressed concern about documents related to comments Pruitt made on CNBC disputing that carbon dioxide from human activities was the primary cause of climate change. Those documents had been released to E&E News without first going through their review.

“Why did Kevin Bogardus from E&E all of a sudden get a response to a FOIA today, without any awareness from our FOIA office?” Bowman wrote Aug. 2. She later added that the response “wasn't due until 8/30.”

Officials quickly determined that the request had been filled by a career employee before Bowman had a chance to flag it “for attention.” Although the request involved Pruitt, the records sought by E&E were kept at EPA's Office of Research and Development, and the request was routed there before being released by a FOIA expert from that office.

Anything related to Pruitt “will draw inquiries from press,” Jackson replied, and he requested that he and the public affairs office be notified ahead of any Pruitt-related release from any EPA office.

The message was received loud and clear by EPA's career staff.

"I have instructed my staff that no [Office of the Administrator] requests are to be issued without the opportunity for an awareness review by you, [the Office of Public Affairs] and the senior leadership of any other affected offices," Becky Dolph, the head of a special team of FOIA experts in EPA's Office of General Counsel, wrote to Jackson later that day.

Emails sent later that month showed Jackson pressing staff on why documents related to a coal plant water pollution rule were already available online just one day after an awareness review began.

The documents were "inadvertently" posted, replied Kevin Minoli, then EPA's acting general counsel, who added that the process would be changed so that "nothing is uploaded at all until we have the final set of documents and their production has been authorized."

None of the emails given to the NRDC reveal exactly what actions the political staffers conducting these reviews took.

NRDC attorney Aaron Colangelo said he asked EPA for details about the reviews after an EPA attorney told him that "awareness reviews" were delaying the release of documents in other FOIA requests filed by the environmental group. Those requests were related to Pruitt's participation in ongoing legal cases that he'd previously been involved in during his time as Oklahoma's attorney general.

Colangelo and other FOIA experts said federal agencies have discretion to set up their own internal FOIA processes, and the political reviews are not illegal — unless the reviews caused EPA to miss deadlines for producing documents set out in the Freedom of Information Act.

"There's nothing necessarily wrong with political folks getting a heads-up before potentially sensitive documents are released," Colangelo said in an interview. "But we do have a legitimate objection if that political review delays compliance with deadlines in the law."

And that has happened for at least two of the NRDC's Pruitt-related FOIA requests, he said.

Another request from a coalition of environmental groups for documents about Pruitt's delay of a rule limiting water pollution from coal plants was held up over a "senior management review."

A judge mediating the lawsuit over that delay, Valerie Caproni of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, said during November proceedings that while EPA "can do whatever internal policies in particular they want on FOIA," the agency cannot use political reviews to justify missing legal deadlines.

EPA still has to "comply with the law, and that means they have to produce documents in a timely way," she said. EPA eventually handed over the documents in that case.

It's not clear exactly how many FOIA requests have been delayed by political reviews, but experts say it is clearly having an impact.

Several Obama-era EPA political officials said they too occasionally received "heads-up" awareness reviews on high-profile requests, but not necessarily to the degree that Pruitt's aides are doing them.

"It doesn't seem abnormal to me that some political would get a chance to have review for awareness of productions that are going out that involve the administrator," said one former official. But the close attention from top-ranking officials like Jackson and former policy chief Samantha Dravis seemed "a little bit odd," the former official added.

Instead, awareness reviews generally went to the head of the agency program office in question and to congressional affairs staffers so they could coordinate with any requests from lawmakers, the former official said.

One Obama-era awareness review that was included in the new documents showed that a large batch of documents related to the Flint, Michigan, lead crisis was flagged to political officials in the Office of Water and the congressional affairs office, as well as the general counsel, the regional administrator and a public affairs official.

Bowman, the EPA spokeswoman, did not comment on questions from POLITICO about the political oversight of FOIA requests, but she noted that the Trump administration was not the first to use them.

“Each EPA program and Region does their own FOIAs, so an awareness review allows the press office, Congressional Affairs Office and senior officials to be informed of documents being released in response to FOIA requests, to facilitate inter-office coordination, and to prepare responses to inquiries,” she said.

Thomas Cmar, an Earthjustice attorney involved in multiple FOIA lawsuits with EPA, said the emails raise as many questions as they answer.

“Political staff appear to be keeping a very close eye on what information is being requested and released to the public,” he said. “It raises concerns and it raises questions that need to be answered about whether EPA is living up to its obligations to make basic information about its activities available to the public that it’s supposed to be serving.”

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/07/climate/epa-pruitt-emails-secrecy.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FEnvironmental%20Protection%20Agency&action=click&conten>

E.P.A. Emails Show an Effort to Shield Pruitt From Public Scrutiny

By Eric Lipton and Lisa Friedman, 5/7/18

WASHINGTON — The invitation-only breakfast at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington gathered 250 executives from the nation's largest electric utilities, assembled in a ballroom to meet with Scott Pruitt, who a month before had started his new job as chief of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Pruitt had spent the previous six years as Oklahoma's attorney general attacking E.P.A. regulations in court, often in coordination with energy giants. Now he ran the agency, and he was ready to lay out his vision for the energy executives. "Whoever said you can't have your cake and eat it too, doesn't know what to do with cake," Mr. Pruitt said, according to a speech prepared for the March 2017 event.

Details from the breakfast, and dozens of other official appearances from Mr. Pruitt's scandal-plagued first year at the E.P.A., have until now been hidden from public view as a result of an extraordinary effort by Mr. Pruitt and his aides to maintain strict secrecy about the bulk of his daily schedule.

But a new cache of emails covering most of Mr. Pruitt's first year heading the E.P.A. shows that the agency's close control of his public events is driven more by a desire to avoid tough questions from the public than by concerns about security, contradicting Mr. Pruitt's longstanding defense of his secretiveness.

The more than 10,000 documents, made public as part of a Freedom of Information lawsuit by the Sierra Club, an environmental organization, offer visibility for the first time not only into many of Mr. Pruitt's appearances nationwide but into the agency's aggressive concealment of his activities as a public servant. The files show an agency focused on dividing people into "friendly" and "unfriendly" camps and which, on one occasion, a secret visit to a Toyota plant, became so focused on not disclosing the trip that his hosts expressed confusion about the publicity value of the visit.

In another instance, planning what was billed as a "town hall" discussion for farmers in Iowa, the E.P.A. emails show that the chief concern among Mr. Pruitt's top aides to control who would

actually be allowed to ask him questions. Ultimately, the agency scripted questions for Mr. Pruitt to answer from the stage.

“The security aspect is smoke and mirrors,” said Kevin Chmielewski, Mr. Pruitt’s former deputy chief of staff for operations, who is one of several former E.P.A. officials who have said that they were fired or sidelined for disagreeing with Mr. Pruitt’s management practices. “He didn’t want anybody to question anything,” Mr. Chmielewski said, adding that Mr. Pruitt “just doesn’t understand what it’s like to be a public figure.”

Three other current and former agency officials, who asked not to be identified because they still work for the government, expressed similar views.

The E.P.A. did not respond to requests for comment about the documents, which detail Mr. Pruitt’s plans for travel and appearances nationwide. In the past, E.P.A. officials have said that Mr. Pruitt has faced an unprecedented number of death threats, which account for the size of his security force and the agency’s refusal to make public his daily schedule. Mr. Pruitt testified before Congress last month that Mr. Chmielewski had resigned.

All politicians are attuned to image-building, of course, and employ staffs whose job is to control the environments in which they appear. Mr. Pruitt, though, has carried the practice to an extreme.

Breaking with all of his predecessors at the E.P.A. for the last 25 years, as well as other members of President Trump’s cabinet, he does not release a list of public speaking events and he discloses most official trips only after they are over. Mr. Pruitt doesn’t hold news conferences, and in one episode, journalists who learned of an event were ejected from the premises after an E.P.A. official threatened to call the police.

The E.P.A. also declined to make public a copy of Mr. Pruitt’s detailed calendar until it was sued by The New York Times and other organizations.

More recently, the agency moved to require that any documents related to Mr. Pruitt that are gathered as a result of Freedom of Information requests be provided to his political aides 48

hours in advance for an “awareness review” before they are made public, “to insure that leadership is aware of public disclosures,” a June email said.

Mr. Pruitt currently faces 11 investigations into his spending and management at the E.P.A., many of which stem from the appetite for secrecy. He is under investigation for first-class travel at taxpayer expense, his elaborate security detail and the purchase of a \$43,000 soundproof booth for making telephone calls.

Separately, a New York Times investigation found that, in 2003 when he served as a legislator in Oklahoma, Mr. Pruitt bought a home in a transaction that involved two lobbyists with business before the state, and disguised the purchase by using a shell company.

The emails document Mr. Pruitt’s top aides taking steps to block the public from his appearances.

For example, in Nevada, Iowa, organizers of an event celebrating Mr. Pruitt’s plans to repeal an Obama-era water regulation that many ranchers dislike informed the E.P.A. that they had already announced the event as open. “This has been sold as a town hall meeting” — meaning anyone could ask questions — wrote Bill Couser, an Iowa cattle farmer who was helping organize the December event, in an email to the E.P.A.

In Washington, E.P.A. officials objected.

“With a crowd of 300 people plus open press, we have to stick with the questions we currently have,” Millan Hupp, Mr. Pruitt’s scheduling director, replied. “My sincere apologies for causing any difficulty but we cannot do open q&a from the crowd.”

The agency prevailed. Mr. Pruitt answered questions presented to him by Mr. Couser that were written by E.P.A. officials, according to the emails and a video recording of the event.

Efforts like these to prevent reporters from attending events were not a part of the playbook for past E.P.A. administrators, according to spokeswomen for Christine Todd Whitman, who served in the George W. Bush administration, and Lisa Jackson and Gina McCarthy, who served under President Barack Obama. “They didn’t selectively inform the press or take any steps to keep things secret,” Heather Grizzle, a spokeswoman for Ms. Whitman, said.

Mr. Pruitt takes a different approach. The emails show agency officials defining prospective guests at events as friendly or unfriendly, and reorganizing events at the last minute if there are concerns that people who are considered unfriendly might show up.

“Sixteen friendly Industry leaders will be invited to attend they will arrive at 8:30 with the Administrator expected to arrive at 9:00 a.m.,” said one memo, shared among top E.P.A. officials last September, in advance of a visit by Mr. Pruitt to Colorado Springs, where Mr. Pruitt was scheduled to speak with the National Association of Homebuilders. The event was closed to the public and not announced publicly ahead of time.

Gerald M. Howard, the organization’s top executive, “will moderate Q&A on Industry issues set forth in advance and possibly from the audience — who are all industry friendly and supportive of Mr. Pruitt and his efforts,” the description said.

In another instance, after a Missouri news outlet discovered, and tweeted, that Mr. Pruitt was planning to speak to about 150 representatives of electric cooperatives and power-plant owners last April, E.P.A. staff went into damage-control mode.

The meeting had not been publicly disclosed. Tate Bennett, who as associate administrator at the E.P.A. is in charge of environmental education, asked Barry Hart of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives if the news organization, Missouri Network Television, was “the friendly outlet.” Shaun Kober, founder of Missouri Network Television, said “we just try to lay out the facts.”

Mr. Hart replied, “It is, but since it’s a public tweet you have to assume the world now knows including all news media ... even unfriendly.”

The group, in consultation with the E.P.A., had already discussed a strategy to counteract any negative comments that appeared on social media.

“Our plan will be to promote the feel-good activity and news from the event,” Gus Wagner, a public relations executive working with organizers, wrote in one email shared with the E.P.A. “Comments that are positive will be liked and possibly shared,” he wrote. “Comments that are derogatory and/or abusive will be hidden from public view. Commenter receives no notification this hiding has happened.”

Sometimes the E.P.A.’s approach to public relations — issuing announcements only after events were over — confused its hosts. Among them was Stephen Ciccone, a vice president for government affairs at Toyota Motor North America, which organized a visit by Mr. Pruitt to its Texas auto plant in August.

“I thought you all did not want any press coverage?” Mr. Ciccone wrote, unsure as to why the E.P.A. would issue a news release at all.

An email back from the E.P.A. explained the plan. The agency welcomed coverage as long as it was on the agency’s terms.

A release would be made “highlighting all the stops Administrator Pruitt makes during his visit to Texas,” the email said. As planned, government-issued photos of a smiling Mr. Pruitt and executives from Toyota were posted on the E.P.A.’s website soon after the event was over, describing it as an “action tour.”

The effort to control the event almost fell apart when one journalist caught wind of the trip.

“We just received an inquiry from a CBS News reporter in Dallas about the visit,” Mr. Ciccone wrote to the E.P.A. on the day of the event. “We won’t reply until the visit is over.”

In another instance not previously made public, Mr. Pruitt last June aided one of his longtime supporters, Richard Smotkin, who at that time was a Comcast lobbyist and who later helped organize Mr. Pruitt's controversial trip to Morocco. (A month after that December trip, Mr. Smotkin became a \$40,000-a-month foreign agent promoting Morocco's interests abroad.)

Mr. Smotkin's June request ran into ethics questions within the E.P.A.: He had invited Mr. Pruitt to a fund-raiser for a nonprofit group that Mr. Smotkin helps run, the American Council of Young Political Leaders, which offers foreign-exchange programs for emerging political leaders. At the event, Mr. Pruitt would be presented with an award in the form of a globe engraved with his name.

"The Ethics department is asking me these questions about the event," wrote Sydney Hupp, Mr. Pruitt's scheduler (and the sister of Millan Hupp, who is also a scheduler for Mr. Pruitt. Both are former Pruitt campaign aides.) The questions had to do with the appropriateness of receiving an award at a fund-raising event.

After a series of emails, Millan Hupp wrote back to the staff at the nonprofit group with a solution: Don't refer Mr. Pruitt's job during the presentation.

"Yes, the Administrator may attend the event, and yes, he may receive the globe. But please do ensure that they refer to him as the Honorable (as opposed to the EPA Administrator)" Ms. Hupp wrote. "So, yay! It's been approved through ethics."

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/05/07/exclusive-epa-scott-pruitt-body-guard-nino-perrotta-false-dirty-laundry/>

EXCLUSIVE: Scott Pruitt's Head Bodyguard Takes On The 'False Dirty Laundry' Being

Spread About EPA [VIDEO]

By Michael Bastasch, 5/7/18, 12:36 AM

Many of the accusations against Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt and his close aides were concocted by “disgruntled employees” looking to damage the agency, the former head of Pruitt’s security detail said.

“I believe at the end of the day, these are disgruntled employees — staffers — who, for whatever reason, decided to air dirty laundry — false dirty laundry to the press,” Nino Perrotta told The Daily Caller News Foundation in an exclusive interview.

Perrotta served as the special agent in charge of Pruitt’s security detail for about a year, leading the administrator’s protective detail as actuations of overspending and ethical violations. Congress and EPA’s Office of Inspector General have multiple investigations into Pruitt’s actions.

Perrotta retired at the end of April, ending his 14-year career at EPA amid investigations into Pruitt’s security arrangements — including his 24/7 detail, hiring of more agents, and flying first class when traveling.

Former EPA official Kevin Chmielewski detailed many accusations against Pruitt, Perrotta and other top aides to congressional Democrats. Many of the accusations were “intentionally used to mislead the American people,” Perrotta told TheDCNF.

Chmielewski was one of several EPA staffers allegedly sidelined for challenging Pruitt on spending decisions. However, Perrotta believes Chmielewski decided to come out against Pruitt after a January 2018 phone call.

During that call, Chmielewski vented to Perrotta about issues he was having with his pay, the former EPA security head said. Perrotta said he tried to help Chmielewski with his pay issue, but the former EPA official “began to threaten the EPA, specifically the administrator and the chief

of staff, that he was going to talk to the press and everyone he could about,” using colorful language, “how f-ed up the EPA was and how f-ed up the administrator was and how f-ed up the chief of staff was.”

“I found that to be very, very bizarre,” Perrotta said. “If you have differences, it should be aired through your chain of command.”

Chmielewski called the next day, but given his tone and threatening statements on their previous call, Perrotta said he’d have to report the former EPA official. Perrotta filed the report with the agency.

Pruitt’s been increasingly mired in negative news stories — many of them likely the result of Chmielewski talking to the press and Congress. News reports have already called into question the veracity of many of Chmielewski’s claim.

For example, “a \$30,000 contract with private Italian security personnel entered into by” Perrotta ahead of Pruitt’s attendance of a G7 summit in Italy, Chmielewski told Congress. Perrotta would never have the authority to unilaterally enter into such a contract, the former EPA security head said.

“That is a false accusation,” Perrotta told TheDCNF. “A person at my level and grade in the agency would have the authority to do so.”

Chmielewski also told Democratic lawmakers “at least one security-related contract was awarded to an individual who works at Mr. Perrotta’s private security firm, and he believes that other contracts may also have been awarded to friends or associates of Mr. Perrotta’s.”

It’s true EPA hired Edwin Steinmetz to conduct a security sweep of Pruitt’s office in 2017, costing the agency \$3,000. Steinmetz is listed on the management team of Perrotta’s security firm he operates on the side, Sequoia Security Group.

Perrotta said he explained to superiors that Steinmetz, a security consultant, subcontracted through his side company, which EPA gave him approval to operate in 2013. EPA officials asked Perrotta in 2017 if he could recommend a company to conduct a security sweep of Pruitt's office.

"The only reason that the vendor was selected," Perrotta said, "is because there were issues within the agency of identifying a new vendor, which to me was bizarre."

"It was clear to me, now, that certain people compared notes, shared information, and created this false narrative. And I believe the American people are going to see this, eventually," Perrotta said.

You can watch TheDCNF's entire interview with Perrotta here. And stay tuned for more.

Politico

<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/05/white-house-wont-comment-on-status-of-pruitt-conduct-review-1169417>

White House mum on status of Pruitt review

By Anthony Adragna, 5/7/18, 3:12 PM

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders declined today to comment on the administration's ongoing review of the ethics and spending scandals dogging EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, or whether President Donald Trump continued to stand by the embattled EPA chief.

"I don't have any personnel announcements on that front," Sanders said.

Asked whether the administration thought recently confirmed EPA Deputy Administrator Andrew Wheeler would continue the ongoing deregulatory efforts launched under Pruitt, Sanders replied: "Certainly, we have confidence in the number two, otherwise the president wouldn't have asked him to serve at such a senior-level position within the EPA."

The White House has said it's looking into the series of scandals surrounding Pruitt, but has provided little information and no updates about what that probe involves. Multiple observers told POLITICO Wheeler would be well-positioned to continue Pruitt's agenda if he became acting administrator without the baggage.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/homenews/media/386259-cnn-panel-cracks-up-laughing-during-discussion-of-pruitt-allegations>

CNN panel breaks down laughing while discussing Pruitt allegations

By Morgan Gstalter, 5/4/18, 3:11 PM

A panel of CNN commentators burst out laughing Friday during a discussion involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt's reported "beyond laughable" corruption.

The group was discussing a series of reports regarding Pruitt's high travel expenses and other controversies surrounding the department head's ethics when panelists broke down in laughter over a Thursday report published by The Atlantic.

The report claimed that a member of Pruitt's press team was trying to shop negative stories about Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to the press in an effort deflect attention from his boss.

"I mean, come on!" CNN host John King said with a laugh.

CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins said it appeared as if there's nothing Pruitt could do to cost him his job.

"This guy has like nine lives," Collins said.

King asked viewers at home to close their eyes and imagine what would happen if an EPA administrator in another administration behaved like Pruitt.

"If this were any other administration, never mind if Hillary Clinton were president, and the EPA had 11 investigations, daily headlines and the Republicans are crickets on this," King said.

Only a few GOP lawmakers have commented on Pruitt's scandals, King said.

The panel said donors and supporters of President Trump are standing by Pruitt because they approve of his efforts to cut Obama-era regulations.

"What has saved Pruitt up until now is this sense that he is accomplishing more than any other Cabinet secretary on the agenda," New York Times reporter Michael Shear said.

But even that feeling is "beginning to fray around the edges," Shear said.

“You begin to think, first of all, will all the investigations hamper any futures efforts that he could do to promote the deregulatory agenda,” Shear said. “And is he sort of making mistakes along the way, legally and other ways, that’s going to undermine what he’s already done?”

As Pruitt faces intense scrutiny for questionable expenditures and other ethical practices, his department is facing a period of rapid departures, losing four aides in the past five days.

Pruitt appeared before House lawmakers last month to defend himself. He is scheduled to testify before a Senate panel later this month, CNN reported.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/05/scott-pruitt-epa-andrew-wheeler-570641>

The man who could replace Scott Pruitt

By Eric Wolff, 5/5/18, 6:43 AM

The man poised to take the reins at the Environmental Protection Agency if Scott Pruitt falls to scandal is a longtime Washington insider and coal lobbyist who would pursue the same anti-regulation agenda — only without all of Pruitt’s baggage.

Andrew Wheeler, sworn in as EPA’s deputy administrator in late April after a six-month confirmation battle, has spent decades in what President Donald Trump calls “the swamp,” first as a top aide to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) at the Environment and Public Works Committee, then as an energy lobbyist for clients such as the politically active coal company Murray Energy.

In contrast to Pruitt, an Oklahoma conservative who has alienated even some fellow Trump-supporting Republicans, Wheeler is a smooth insider with a penchant for policy details and a reputation for working well with both friends and adversaries. But those who have dealt with him say he's on board with the broad deregulatory agenda that Pruitt and Trump are pursuing.

That presents a paradox for environmental groups, who would welcome Pruitt's departure but fear his replacement would be a much more formidable opponent.

"Wheeler is much smarter and will try to keep his efforts under the radar in implementing Trump's destructive agenda," said Jeremy Symons, vice president for political affairs at the Environmental Defense Fund. "That should scare anyone who breathes."

Symons noted that many of Pruitt's aggressive deregulatory efforts have run into trouble in federal courts.

"The problem with the Pruitt approach is it's like a sugar high," said Jeff Navin, a Democratic lobbyist and former Energy Department staffer who has shared lobbying clients with Wheeler. "It feels really, really good for a moment, but if you're not following rules and procedure, not laying down substance for the decision you're making, you're not going to last very long."

Another person who has worked with Wheeler said: "He's like Mike Pence is to Trump. ... He's behind the scenes. He'll get a lot done and doesn't need to be in the news."

Pruitt is hanging on so far, with Trump's public backing, despite a welter of investigations into his first-class travels, expensive security arrangements and relations with industry lobbyists. But if Pruitt goes down, Wheeler would have the task of managing a 14,000-employee agency where much of the career staff, and even many Republican political appointees, have been demoralized by the cascade of scandals.

As the agency's No. 2, Wheeler could immediately fill Pruitt's shoes as acting administrator, though Trump could insert someone above him in a temporary capacity. Although Trump would also have the option of nominating someone else as a permanent successor, Senate Republicans

have questioned whether any nominee could win confirmation this year.

Besides his personal troubles, Pruitt arrived at EPA as one of its most determined adversaries, having filed a series of lawsuits in concert with industry groups to overturn the agency's Obama-era climate and environmental regulations. Pruitt's security team also blocked most agency employees from entering rooms and corridors near his third-floor offices.

Wheeler, in contrast, came to the agency steeped in its work. He spent four years working at EPA at the start of his career, before going on to work for Inhofe and the Senate environment committee. He helped create the federal ethanol mandate that remains a major source of friction for EPA, dividing Republicans in the Senate. He also represented coal magnate Bob Murray as a lobbyist through the battles over the Obama administration's climate regulations for power plants, and then later in trying to persuade the Energy Department to bail out financially ailing coal power plants.

Former Hill colleagues emphasize his ability to find common ground with political opponents, including former Sen. Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.), and liberal former Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer of California, both of whom have chaired the environment committee. Matt Dempsey, who worked for Wheeler under Inhofe, said Wheeler's ability to find common cause was one factor in the Jeffords-Inhofe and Jeffords-Boxer relationships that led to passage of highway bills and other major legislation.

"A lot of that is due to Andrew," said Dempsey, now a managing director at FTI Consulting. "He has an ability to work across the aisle and get things done."

That ability to work the Hill could be critical at EPA, where Pruitt's work on making changes to the ethanol program has divided oil-state and corn-state Senate Republicans. Those efforts have especially infuriated corn supporters led by Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), who accused Pruitt this week of "screwing the family farmer."

Wheeler's former colleagues think he might be able to smooth those waters.

“He is someone who, generally on policy, though we might not always agree, is someone who will listen to the other side of the aisle on how we formulate policy,” a Democratic aide who has worked with Wheeler told POLITICO, noting that that trait could be especially important if the House or Senate flips after the midterms. “Being a product of the Senate and of the Congress, it will be much easier for those who are here to interact with him.”

Among other things, the Democratic aide said, Wheeler respects Congress’ role in the authorization and appropriations process and would be much more willing to appear at congressional hearings — unlike Pruitt, who has been scarce on the Hill.

The aide also said they think Wheeler’s reputation as a “rule-driven” staffer would ensure stricter adherence to ethics standards at the agency.

Wheeler may also be better able to repair the fractured relationship between the political appointees at the top of the agency and career staff, who have felt left out or ignored by Pruitt on key issues. Wheeler has spent some of his first days back at the agency visiting the offices of career staff and making introductions, a marked change from his boss, according to an EPA official.

"The impression he creates is very personable, respectful, good listener," said another EPA employee. "He’s very interested in being involved in the substantive issues. He’s ready to get involved in our issues."

Still, most of the people interviewed agreed that Wheeler would advance Trump’s and Pruitt’s agenda of undoing major Obama-era regulations, including the power plant climate rule and a sweeping measure on streams and wetlands.

“I think that Andrew is well aware of the president’s agenda, and the parts of the agenda that are the responsibility of the EPA,” said Andy Ehrlich, now a partner at the lobbying and political consulting firm Total Spectrum, who recruited Wheeler from the Hill in 2009 to the law firm Faegre Baker Daniels and worked with him for years. “I would expect based on my experience with Andrew to do what he can to see that the president’s agenda at the EPA is fulfilled in a methodical and thoughtful way.”

Pruitt and Wheeler may have some small differences: The Democratic aide said Wheeler might offer more support to the agency's research, in contrast to Pruitt. But people who know Wheeler see him as a "true believer" in rolling back regulations who is comfortable in the weeds of policy.

That's the worry of environmental groups, which note the years Wheeler spent working with Inhofe, who calls human-caused global warming a "hoax," and Murray, a fierce opponent of EPA's climate regulations.

Wheeler's "entire professional career, most of it has been devoted to resisting attempts to improve the quality of our air and our water and the safety of our communities," said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune. "He fought against safeguards to limit mercury poisoning. He fought against protections to limit the amount of ozone in our skies. He fought against air pollution from neighboring states. He's a climate denier. So, sadly, he fits in well with EPA leadership."

Environmental groups also believe Wheeler has his own ethics baggage, citing reports that he held fundraisers for political patrons in the months ahead of his official nomination to EPA. Brune held out one bit of hope — that Wheeler would face the same obstacles as Pruitt in turning back EPA's environmental protections.

"Any executive with EPA, administrator or deputy, will have a hard time trying to flout the findings of the scientific community and operate against the public will," Brune said. "I don't think Wheeler would be more effective at that than Pruitt has been."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/386281-upheaval-at-pruitts-epa-as-departures->

mount

Upheaval at Pruitt's EPA as departures mount

By Miranda Green, 5/6/18, 6:00 AM

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) appears to be in a state of massive upheaval following the departure of several aides and new allegations against the agency's embattled administrator, Scott Pruitt.

Four officials at the agency have stepped down in the past week, an exodus that has deprived Pruitt of some of his closest aides.

Meanwhile, several new controversies have exploded around Pruitt regarding his travel and his ties to lobbyists.

People with knowledge of the departures at EPA likened them to getting out of Dodge, either due to impending investigations or simply a desire to escape a tumultuous work environment. One source described the offices at EPA as "eerily quiet" this week.

The first resignation came Tuesday, when Albert Kelly, a close friend of Pruitt's who was hired to lead the EPA's Superfund program, announced his departure.

The week before Kelly's resignation, two Democratic House members had asked EPA's inspector general to investigate Kelly's qualifications and "unexplained red flags." Once someone leaves government employment, the inspector general's office cannot compel someone to comply with an investigation.

Lawmakers became interested in Kelly after it emerged in December that he had been banned for life from working in the banking sector. Reports also asserted that Kelly had helped get Pruitt financing for a mortgage and to buy a minor league baseball team.

Tuesday also brought the departure of Pruitt's head of security, Pasquale Perrotta, a career official who previously worked at the Secret Service. He said he was leaving the EPA because press coverage was taking a toll on his family.

Perrotta's resignation came the day before he was to testify in front of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which is looking into various incidents at the EPA.

Perrotta had been under the microscope for decisions he'd made as Pruitt's security chief as well as reports that he used his power to influence a number of EPA security contracts, including an April 2017 security sweep in the administrator's office completed by his business partner at an outside security group.

EPA's Office of Inspector General announced in late April that they were investigating Pruitt's "use of staff and expenditures for security measures."

Kevin Chmielewski, a former EPA political aide turned whistleblower, alleged to lawmakers in early April that Perrotta retaliated against him at EPA when he had pushed back on Pruitt's travel expenses.

Chmielewski told lawmakers that in February he returned from a work trip to Japan to find his office locked and credentials revoked. Perrotta later called him, he said, and demanded he also return his parking pass, saying he would personally go to Chmielewski's home to forcibly retrieve it.

By the end of the week, members of Pruitt's communications team were also jumping ship.

On Thursday, Pruitt's top public affairs official, Liz Bowman, announced she was leaving the agency to join Sen. Joni Ernst's (R-Iowa) communications department on Capitol Hill.

She would not say how long the move had been planned, but said “it was time.”

The next day, the press office’s second in command, John Konkus, announced he was also leaving, this time to take a position at the Small Business Administration.

Konkus had previously been named in a report as the EPA staffer tasked with sifting through EPA grant awards to make sure they didn’t conflict with the Trump administration’s deregulatory goals.

Pruitt’s tenure has been marked by controversy, a storm of accusations that he denounced in congressional testimony as “fiction” concocted by his opponents.

Among other things, Pruitt has faced scrutiny for frequently traveling first class on business trips, for utilizing a round-the-clock security team even on personal trips and for renting a room from the wife of a then-lobbyist in Washington.

When lawmakers pressed him about those accusations and others in his late April testimony, Pruitt often shifted blame to top aides and denied knowledge of things that were done on his behalf — including significant raises given to two EPA aides who came to D.C. with Pruitt from Oklahoma, where he had been attorney general.

Since the testimony, the EPA has faced a new onslaught of negative headlines. Reports have broadly asserted that Pruitt and EPA political aides had planned multiple foreign trips for the administrator with help from lobbyists and consultants who had business interests abroad.

Amid the negative headlines and staff turnover, The Atlantic reported that Michael Abboud, a member of the EPA’s press team, had been shopping a negative story about Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in an attempt to take the heat off Pruitt. A source with knowledge of the reported incident confirmed to The Hill that Abboud was pitching the negative story.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox has called the report "categorically false."

Abboud previously worked at America Rising, a conservative opposition research group. He's also related to Andy Abboud, senior vice president of government relations and community development for billionaire Sheldon Adelson's Las Vegas Sands Corporation. Adelson is a prominent Republican donor.

Adelson figured predominantly in helping Pruitt plan a scheduled February trip to Israel, the Washington Post reported late Thursday. The trip was canceled after controversy erupted over Pruitt's use of first-class air travel.

Andy Abboud confirmed to the Post his own involvement in planning Pruitt's Israel agenda.

A House Democratic aide said that it would be hard to tell just how lawmakers will respond to the latest events once they come back from recess Monday, but suggested the latest developments have cast a cloud over Pruitt's testimony in late April. Specifically, the aide pointed out that Pruitt had testified that the agency did not retaliate against internal whistleblowers, despite Chmielewski alleging the contrary, and had said his real estate dealings with lobbyists weren't serious, despite new reports that he had once co-owned a home with one.

"If we were in the majority now, we'd be accusing him of perjury," the aide said.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/04/scott-pruitt-rent-lobbyist-couple-fine-569678>

Couple who rented condo to Pruitt pays fine to D.C.

By Anthony Adragna, 5/4/18, 4:35 PM

The lobbyist couple whose condo EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt leased for \$50 a night paid a \$2,034 fine Friday for wrongly renting out the property, a spokesman for the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs said.

“The owner agreed to pay the fine for engaging in a business without a housing residential license,” the spokesman told POLITICO.

Pruitt rented the condo for several months last year from Vicki Hart. It emerged in late April that Pruitt had met with her lobbyist husband, Steven Hart, despite his denials, and that Hart had also recommended three people to serve on the agency’s Scientific Advisory Board.

The Harts’ condo arrangement with Pruitt was already rocky. The EPA chief was reportedly slow to pay his rent and the Harts eventually had to change the locks.

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/05/04/gop-lawmakers-target-epa-mining/>

GOP Lawmakers Target ‘Tool Of Tyranny’ EPA Used To Kill Mining

By Jason Hopkins, 5/4/18, 2:55 PM

Republican lawmakers have been largely satisfied with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt’s work rolling back industry regulations, but they are voicing their disgust with his decision to keep in place a preemptive veto of an Alaskan mine project.

Eighteen GOP congressmen, led by the Western Congressional Caucus, issued a letter on Thursday to Pruitt, urging him to reverse course on his decision to maintain an Obama-era preemptive veto on the Pebble Mine project in southwest Alaska.

“We write to express our concerns with regard to the EPA’s decision not to scrap the Obama Administration’s preemptive veto, also known as the Proposed Determination, for the prospective Pebble Limited Partnership mining project,” the letter began, going into detail as to why the Obama administration was wrong to block proper review of the project. “In a future administration, this dangerous precedent could be utilized as a tyrannical tool ... It therefore poses a threat to the integrity of our entire project review system while casting the spectre of a double standard over this particular project.”

Pebble Mine is the name of a proposed mining project in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska, an area that contains deposits of gold, porphyry and molybdenum. However, the project was derailed by the previous administration in a move that many critics framed as unlawful and unprecedented. In February 2014, the Obama-led EPA vetoed Pebble’s progress before it received an environmental review from the Army Corps of Engineers — the regular process under the Clean Water Act. Instead of weighing in upon the review, the EPA blocked the proposal by circumventing the entire process.

Pruitt gave indications that he would repeal this veto when he began at the EPA. However, in a surprise move, Pruitt announced on Jan. 26 he would be keeping Proposed Determination in place. The EPA chief ultimately ruled that “any mining projects in the region likely pose a risk to the abundant natural resources that exist there.” In its determination, the agency added that more than 1 million comments had been submitted to them, mainly in opposition to the project.

Pebble Mine proponents said Pruitt’s moves are tarnishing his reputation as a successful and prolific reformer of the agency he leads.

“The preemptive veto of the Pebble project in Alaska – a holdover of the Obama EPA – is the one glaring blemish staining Administrator Pruitt’s record,” said Republican Rep. Paul Gosar of Arizona in a statement issued Thursday. “This kind of power-grab has no place surviving into a Republican administration – not least because we know future Administrations would be glad to

abuse such power in even more severe ways.”

Gosar is joined by a number of other Republicans and related association groups in calling for the veto to be struck.

Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/the-epas-new-secret-science-rule-makes-sense-from-a-risk-assessment-perspective>

The EPA's new 'secret science' rule makes sense from a risk-assessment perspective

By Michael L. Dourson, 5/6/18, 12:00 AM

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt’s recent announcement that EPA will not use “secret science” — that is science for which the underlying data is not available — is challenging. Whereas EPA is routinely in receipt of unpublished toxicity studies for chemicals designed for commerce, not all important scientific findings are publishable. Nor do scientific journals generally have sufficient space to include all data.

Much has been made in recent weeks of this new EPA policy, including an op-ed opposing it by former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and former acting Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe.

The media coverage has focused attention on how science is considered acceptable and useful in EPA’s rulemaking. But missing from this is the perspective of risk scientists charged with protecting public health. In the case of EPA, it is often not enough for any one positive study to be published in a peer-reviewed journal. Such work often needs replication because a positive finding occurs, on average, in one out of every 20 studies due to chance.

If a study cannot be replicated, then it at least needs to make sense within the pattern of available data. For pesticides regulated by EPA, these data are often from hundreds of studies done according to federal guidelines.

Studies that are not replicated or that do not make sense in an overall pattern are still considered, however. Risk scientists will often contact the authors to obtain additional information in order to conduct their own analysis, a common practice within EPA.

When such data are forthcoming, without the need to break confidentiality or disclose confidential business information, independent analyses can be conducted and the public health is better served. But when such information is withheld by the authors, government risk scientists are often left with a dilemma.

For example, imagine that a series of studies come out on a single human group that is exposed to a commonly used insecticide, and they show an unexpected effect at extremely low exposures. This finding has not been replicated and clashes with multiple animal and human studies that point to danger only at much higher exposures.

In this case, EPA scientists would ask the authors for the underlying data to confirm this unexpected low-dose effect. But let's say they can't get it. EPA is then left with neither confirmatory studies, nor information that makes sense in light of other studies, nor the ability to conduct its own analysis. Understandably, Pruitt has chosen a policy of not using such studies.

There is one sense in which McCarthy and McCabe are spot on. The judgment over which epidemiology and/or toxicology data to use for risk or safety assessment purposes should be left to risk scientists. But from my perspective as a risk scientist, Pruitt's decision is still correct. The public's interest is best served when science is replicable and consistent with other information. When studies cannot be replicated or are inconsistent with other information, access to their underlying data is vital to independent analysis. When the underlying data are not provided to a risk scientist, it is difficult to use this study to make a credible risk judgment, much less national rulemaking.

In short, the public is often worried about chemical exposure, as they should be when such exposure exceeds a safety level. But the public's interest is best served by trusting in experts dedicated to public health protection, not by withholding scientific data from independent analysis.

Michael L. Dourson, formerly Trump's nominee as Assistant EPA Administrator, is a board-certified toxicologist serving as director of science at the 501(c)3 environmental science NGO Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment. Prior to this, he was a senior adviser in the Office of the Administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-autos-emissions/major-automakers-urge-trump-not-to-freeze-fuel-economy-targets-idUSKBN1I821P>

Major automakers urge Trump not to freeze fuel economy targets

By David Shepardson, 5/7/18, 2:03 PM

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Major automakers are telling the Trump administration they want to reach an agreement with California to avoid a legal battle over fuel efficiency standards, and support continued increases in mileage standards through 2025.

“We support standards that increase year over year that also are consistent with marketplace realities,” Mitch Bainwol, chief executive of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, a trade group representing major automakers, will tell a U.S. House of Representatives panel on Tuesday, according to written testimony released on Monday.

The Trump administration is weighing how to revise fuel economy standards through at least the 2025 model year, and one option is to propose freezing the standards through 2026, effectively

allowing automakers to delay investments in technology to cut greenhouse gas emissions from burning petroleum.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has not formally submitted its joint proposal with the Environmental Protection Agency to the White House Office of Management and Budget for review. Even so, last week, California and 16 other states sued to challenge the Trump administration's decision to revise U.S. vehicle rules.

Auto industry executives have held meetings with the Trump administration for months and have urged the administration to try to reach a deal with California even as they support slowing the pace of reduction in carbon dioxide emissions that the Obama administration rules outlined.

One automaker official said part of the message to President Donald Trump at a meeting on Friday will be to consider California like a foreign trade deal that needs to be renegotiated. Automakers want to urge him to get automakers a "better deal" – as opposed to potentially years of litigation between major states and federal regulators.

On Friday, Trump is set to meet with the chief executives of General Motors Co, Ford Motor Co, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV and the top U.S. executives of at least five other major automakers, including Toyota Motor Corp, Volkswagen AG (VOWG_p.DE) and Daimler AG, to talk about revisions to the vehicle rules. Senior EPA and Transportation Department officials will also attend.

Environmental groups are eager to keep the rules in place, saying they will save consumers billions in fuel costs. A coalition of groups plans to stage a protest outside Ford's headquarters in Michigan.

The Obama administration's rules, negotiated with automakers in 2011, were aimed at doubling average fleetwide fuel efficiency to about 50 miles (80 km) per gallon by 2025.

Heidi King, the Trump administration's nominee to head NHTSA, which oversees Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) rules, is set to have a confirmation hearing on May 16 before

the Senate Commerce Committee.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-epa-lawsuit/illinois-to-sue-epa-for-exempting-foxconn-plant-from-pollution-controls-idUSKBN1I52NB>

Illinois to sue EPA for exempting Foxconn plant from pollution controls

By Valerie Volcovici, 5/4/18, 6:42 PM

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Illinois' Attorney General said on Friday she plans to sue the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for allowing a proposed Foxconn Technology Co Ltd plant in neighboring Wisconsin to operate without stringent pollution controls.

On Tuesday, the EPA identified 51 areas in 22 states that do not meet federal air quality requirements for ozone, a step toward enforcing the standards issued in 2015.

An exempted area was Racine County, Wisconsin, just north of the Illinois border that is known to have heavily polluted air, where Taiwan-based Foxconn is building a \$10 billion liquid-crystal display plant.

Pollution monitoring data show the county's ozone levels exceed the 70 parts per billion (ppb) limit. If Racine County had been designated a "non-attainment" area, it would have required Foxconn to install stringent pollution control equipment.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan said she would file a lawsuit in the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals challenging the EPA's ozone designations, saying its failure to name Racine

County a “non-attainment” area puts people at risk.

“Despite its name, the Environmental Protection Agency now operates with total disregard for the quality of our air and water, and in this case, the U.S. EPA is putting a company’s profit ahead of our natural resources and the public’s health,” Madigan said in a statement.

The EPA, under Administrator Scott Pruitt, left Racine County off its non-attainment list despite an agency staff analysis of ozone levels in Wisconsin published in December, which found that the county’s air exceeded federal ozone limits.

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, who supports bringing Foxconn to Wisconsin, tweeted on Tuesday that the state would work with EPA “to implement a plan that continues to look out for the best interest of Wisconsin.”

Wisconsin’s Republican-controlled state Assembly last year voted to approve a bill that paves the way for a \$3 billion incentives package for a proposed by Foxconn.

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=133387490&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Industry Heated as EPA Stays Silent on Global Coolant Deal

By Abby Smith, 5/7/18

Appliance manufacturers and chemical makers have had enough of the Trump administration's silence on a global deal to reduce climate-warming coolants, and they've got a message for the EPA: Speak up.

For months, the U.S. refrigeration and chemical industries have quietly lobbied the Trump administration to support a 2016 global agreement to phase down hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, refrigerant chemicals that are highly potent greenhouse gases. And though a State Department official offered tentative backing for the deal late last year, it's unclear if the industry is any closer to convincing the president to send the pact to the Senate for ratification, where it would face an uphill battle in the Republican-controlled chamber.

The industry is now shifting the onus to the Environmental Protection Agency. It's not enough for EPA head Scott Pruitt to tell companies the agency isn't standing in the way of ratification, industry representatives said. Companies want the administrator or agency air chief Bill Wehrum to publicly urge the president to move forward with the HFC deal.

“He can say that without a legal opinion. That isn't going to hurt him,” Kevin Fay, executive director of the Alliance for Responsible Atmospheric Policy in Washington, D.C., told EPA officials at a May 4 stakeholder meeting.

Fay said the agency owes that much to the industry, which has invested billions of dollars to transition away from HFCs and to manufacture climate-friendly alternatives.

“You have all these people now wondering where they stand in the process,” Fay added. “You have got to say something more than, ‘We don't know.’”

Interagency Process

EPA officials, though, largely dodged industry questions about where the agency stands on the HFC deal, known as the Kigali Amendment. They said the EPA is engaged in an ongoing interagency process to determine a path forward.

“The administration hasn't been saying much, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening,” Wehrum, who sat in on the latter half of the meeting, told stakeholders. He said several parts of the administration, including the departments of Commerce and Defense, were participating in

discussions.

But Wehrum and other EPA officials declined to take a substantive position on the Kigali agreement.

The agency can't speak unilaterally for a multi-agency deliberation process, said Justin Schwab, EPA's deputy general counsel. But he also told a frustrated Fay, "I just want you to know how seriously we are taking this."

Economic Impact

The EPA held the May 4 meeting to discuss April 13 [guidance](#) stating it won't implement Obama-era limits on the use of HFCs while it rewrites them. Last summer, a federal appeals court partially struck down those limits, which would have been the foundation for U.S. compliance with the Kigali deal.

Agency officials said they aim to provide certainty to industry in the forthcoming rewrite process—but almost all companies represented at the meeting said ratifying the Kigali deal would offer the greatest amount of clarity. Even representatives from the two chemical companies that brought the winning lawsuit against Obama-era HFC limits, Mexichem Fluor Inc. and Arkema Inc., reiterated their strong support for the Kigali agreement.

Congress has weighed in, too. A bipartisan group of senators—led by Sens. John Kennedy (R-La.) and Tom Carper (D-Del.)—introduced legislation in February that would direct the EPA to establish a market-based system to implement the HFC deal's requirements.

Industry is trying to speak about the Kigali deal in the Trump administration's language. A May 3 [report](#) from the Alliance for Responsible Atmospheric Policy and the Air-Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Institute said ratification of the agreement would add 33,000 manufacturing jobs to the industry by 2027. The report also estimated an additional \$12.5 billion of manufacturing output in the sector per year would result from Kigali ratification.

Without Kigali, U.S. companies could see their investments go elsewhere and their products priced out of foreign markets, said Charlie Hon, sustainability and government affairs manager for the Missouri-based True Manufacturing Co., Inc., which specializes in commercial refrigeration products.

“That's a direct reversal of what this administration promises. Working ourselves out of jobs is not what we're looking for,” Hon told EPA officials. “If we don't have this regulatory stability, we're going to lose. It's just plain as day to us as a corporation.”

The Spokesman-Review

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/may/05/epa-declines-to-test-air-downwind-of-lead-smelter-/>

EPA declines to test air downwind of lead smelter in British Columbia

By Becky Kramer, 5/5/18

The state of Washington will look for money to conduct air quality monitoring downwind of a Canadian smelter after the federal government declined to restart the testing.

Trail, British Columbia, is home to one of the world's largest lead and zinc smelters and refineries. The community of Northport, Washington, is about 20 miles south of the smelter.

Two years of air monitoring would cost about \$300,000. The state Department of Ecology will look into options for funding the work, including grants or agency funding, said Brook Beeler, an Ecology spokeswoman.

More than 100 local residents sent a petition to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in December, asking the agency to install air monitors from Northport to the U.S.-Canadian border.

The petition came after state modeling indicated Teck Resources Ltd.'s smelter could be sending the highest known airborne levels of arsenic and lead in Washington, Idaho and Oregon over the border.

Air quality monitoring hasn't been conducted on the Washington side of the border since 2009.

So, state Department of Ecology officials used six years of data from British Columbia's government to project levels of heavy metals crossing the border from 2009 to 2014.

Average lead and arsenic levels modeled at the international border and in Northport were several times higher than the Northwest's next-largest reading, which was taken in an industrial area of Seattle. The modeling also indicated elevated levels of cadmium.

The heavy metals in the emissions wouldn't pose a short-term risk to Northport-area residents, but long-term inhalation could increase cancer risks, according to the Department of Ecology.

The Northeast Tri-County Health District also supports the monitoring to determine whether a public health risk is present.

EPA officials, however, disagree that additional monitoring is needed.

"From our evaluation of data collected in 1999 to 2009, we believe that the risk to you from the outdoor air in Northport is low," wrote Cami Grandinetti, a manager in EPA's remedial cleanup program, in an April letter.

Based on additional improvements at the smelter, “we expect current day operations to be even lower,” Grandinetti said in the letter.

Teck has spent more than \$1.5 billion modernizing the Trail smelter since the mid-1990s. Company officials recently said they’ve reduced air and water emissions by more than 95 percent.

About 45 people attended a meeting with EPA officials Thursday night in Northport.

AP

<https://apnews.com/e495266bd5e7490ab3e86dbe1713943f/EPA-requests-new-contamination-testing-at-Michigan-tannery>

EPA requests new contamination testing at Michigan tannery

5/7/18

ROCKFORD, Mich. (AP) — Federal environmental officials are resuming an investigation into contamination at a former tannery in western Michigan five years after the Environmental Protection Agency left the site under state control.

The Grand Rapids Press reports that the EPA says new testing will begin this month at the former manufacturing site where Wolverine World Wide used chemicals to waterproof shoe leather.

The EPA has requested Wolverine conduct extensive soil and groundwater sampling across the Rockford property. The site has been open to the community and used as a space for events since

2010.

Recent testing found extremely high levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances at the site. But the EPA is focusing its probe on other contaminants as well.

Wolverine says it's working with regulators and expects to begin fieldwork this summer.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060081005/search?keyword=EPA>

Agency employees, Jeff Bezos up for government 'Oscars'

By Nick Sobczyk, 5/7/18

Employees from EPA and the departments of Energy and the Interior are in the running for distinguished civil service awards.

The Partnership for Public Service yesterday announced 27 finalists for its Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals, known as the "Sammies" for short.

The group will be honored at a ceremony tomorrow to commemorate Public Service Recognition Week, and seven winners will be crowned at an Oct. 2 gala in Washington.

"Amid the political headlines, it's easy to overlook our nation's career public servants who perform the essential day-to-day work of government," said Max Stier, president and CEO of the

Partnership for Public Service, in a statement. "That's why the Service to America Medals are so important — they showcase the many remarkable men and women who assist their fellow Americans with passion to maintain the safety, health and prosperity of the nation."

Among the finalists for the career achievement medal is Gerald Ankley, an EPA research toxicologist who for decades has been at the forefront of studying chemical contamination in the Great Lakes.

His nearly 500 scientific papers have helped researchers identify chemicals like PCBs and dioxins in lakes and rivers and laid the groundwork for EPA regulations.

"He has that elite scientific knowledge and understanding, but there's no ambiguity in his commitment," Tina Bahadori, director of EPA's National Center for Environmental Assessment, told the partnership. "His job, his passion, is to do the work that makes this country and this planet a safer place to live. That's been his lifetime commitment and it's been unwavering."

Judith Lynn Allaire DesHarnais of the Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District is also up for the career achievement award for directing a series of major flood control projects. So is Allen Hefner of the National Institute of Standards and Technology for developing a power semiconductor model that revolutionized the electronics industry.

Interior's Mark Bathrick and his team of employees have been nominated for the homeland security and law enforcement medal for building the nation's largest civilian drone fleet. The department uses its 312 unmanned aerial vehicles to spot wildfires and pipeline leaks, as well as in wild horse roundups.

"Mark's program at Interior is the gold standard for civilian use of unmanned aerial vehicles in government," Philip Hall, who heads the drone initiative at NOAA, told the group.

DOE, meanwhile, will send Barbara Kutchko to the October gala. Kutchko is in the running for the science and environment medal for developing new industry standards for the foamed cement that lines oil wells after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon accident.

A pair of federal employees are also on the list of finalists for developing new ways to prepare for natural disasters. Tim Schmit is vying for the science and environment medal for helping create new weather satellite technology for NOAA. Jordan Manos is up for the promising innovation medal for saving the Federal Emergency Management Agency an estimated \$20 million with new damage assessment techniques in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

The winners of the awards will be chosen by a group of leaders from the public and private sectors, including Axios founder and CEO Jim VandeHei, Reps. David Price (D-N.C.) and Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), author Michael Lewis, and American University President Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

The Partnership for Public Service calls its medals the Oscars of government service.

But the Oct. 2 gala could feature one person who has attended the real Oscars: Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos.

The group will award Bezos its first ever private-sector Service to America Medal for collaborating with the federal government on advancements in cloud computing, space exploration and sustainable energy.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 9/1/2017 10:45:41 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by American Bankers Association: SCOOP: Kushner fundraises in North Carolina for MEADOWS -- SPICER's going away party at MXDC -- MICK MULVANEY profile -- MUELLER taps IRS expertise -- B'DAY: Dee Dee Myers

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by American Bankers Association

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

[Listen to the Playbook Audio Briefing](#)

Driving the Day

SPOTTED: SEAN SPICER being feted last night at MXDC for his White House going away party. In his remarks, Spicer joked that former communications director Mike Dubke, who attended, "Lasted 10 Scaramuccis." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2xBT5mP>

Good Friday morning, welcome to September and happy Labor Day weekend!

SCOOP -- JARED KUSHNER quietly escaped to North Carolina last night to raise money at a private fundraiser for **REP. MARK MEADOWS (R-N.C.)**, the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, according to multiple sources familiar with the event. Meadows and Kushner have discussed Israel -- part of Kushner's portfolio, and a key issue for Meadows -- and paid leave, which faces long odds in the Republican Congress. Kushner went in a private capacity. **WHY DOES THIS MATTER?** Easy. Meadows has been a thorn in the side of Republican leaders for years, and is now one of the most powerful men in the Capitol. He has been a key ally of President Donald Trump's -- and an intermediary between conservatives in the House and the White House. Kushner traveling to North Carolina ahead of the long weekend shows the nature of the relationship between Meadows and members of the Trump administration.

NANCY COOK'S UPDATE on tax reform: the White House is expected to unveil a "tax reform relief" website next week. The Administration is also hosting conservative groups at the White House next week, according to a source familiar with the White House tax reform efforts. **ONE THING TO WATCH:** Cabinet secretaries are expected to hold pro-tax reform events in the coming weeks to bolster Trump's efforts.

BUZZ -- Multiple trade groups and companies engaged in influence campaigns have asked their D.C. consultants to exclude anyone in Houston and areas affected by

Harvey from getting their advocacy emails this week, according to a source at a public affairs agency. The source said its clients were trying to be sensitive to victims of the disaster and it would not go well if people affected by the storm get emails like "'Hey - Take action on this!' while you're trying to save your family from raging waters."

THE LATEST ON HARVEY RELIEF -- "GOP aims to approve Harvey relief as soon as next week," by Rachael Bade and Burgess Everett: "House Republicans are gearing up to pass a multibillion-dollar, short-term Hurricane Harvey relief package as early as next week, according to multiple congressional GOP sources. No plans have been finalized but Republican leaders and the White House are weighing a package of nearly \$6 billion to get FEMA through the end of the month. That's likely to include \$5.5 billion in disaster relief funds, plus funding flexibility for FEMA to spend more money if needed, as well as \$450 million in small business loans, according to sources familiar with the matter." <http://politi.co/2vNFDtP>

HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER KEVIN MCCARTHY (R-CALIF.) will travel to Texas this weekend to "survey the damage and make clear to the people of Texas that Congress is with them and stands ready to provide the resources they need to rebuild," according to a source familiar with his trip. McCarthy will be with members of the Texas delegation in Corpus Christi on Sunday and the Houston area on Monday.

-- **"Houston left with a toxic mess as Trump relaxes rules,"** by Ben Lefebvre and Alex Guillén: "Explosions and fires at a Houston-area chemical plant triggered an evacuation Thursday in a region still in chaos from Hurricane Harvey - and generated new criticism of President Donald Trump's efforts to repeal the industry's safety rules. Thursday morning's blasts at the plant came just a day after a federal court refused to force the Environmental Protection Agency to implement an Obama-era chemical safety regulation that the Trump administration has delayed until 2019. The site's owner, Arkema, has complained about the burdens of the rule, which the EPA created after a 2015 explosion at a Texas fertilizer plant killed 15 people, injured about 200 others and destroyed hundreds of homes.

"The rule in question probably wouldn't have prevented Thursday's explosions, but it's aimed at reducing the likelihood of future accidents - and ensuring that emergency responders and the public know what types of dangerous substances they might be exposed to. Firefighters and other emergency crews lack much of that crucial information about the plants and factories now awash with floodwater." <http://politi.co/2vOBk1u>

-- **"Gasoline Prices Jump in Harvey's Wake,"** by WSJ's Alison Sider: "Gasoline prices surged to a two-year high at the pump Thursday after the owner of the largest pipeline in the U.S. reported that shipments are being sharply curtailed, spreading the economic pain from Hurricane Harvey throughout the nation." <http://on.wsj.com/2goc4tl>

THE NEW POLITICAL REALITY -- NYT'S CARL HULSE: "Hurricane Harvey Shifts Political Winds in Washington": "Gone are the confrontational talk of a government

shutdown and the brinkmanship over the debt limit. Instead, both Mr. Trump and his putative allies in Congress - many of them professed fiscal hawks - are promising an outpouring of federal aid to begin a recovery and rebuilding effort that will last for years and require tens of billions of dollars, if not substantially more, from Washington. ...

"Facing a difficult September, deeply divided over spending and what to do about the debt limit, Mr. Trump and congressional leaders may find that a devastating storm has provided them the common cause that has proved so elusive after their failure to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Mr. Trump is eager to be seen as a competent manager in his first big test in a natural disaster, and a shutdown could shatter that image. Lawmakers want to deliver for the Texas and Louisiana communities pounded by Harvey, a region that is not only a driver of the national economy but a center of Republican strength." <http://nyti.ms/2vP67uS>

TRUMP'S CHANGES TO WASHINGTON ...

-- **"Trump administration slashes Obamacare outreach,"** by Rachana Pradhan: "Senior HHS officials on Thursday afternoon said the federal government will cut the Obamacare advertising budget from \$100 million to \$10 million in the upcoming 2018 enrollment season. Funding for so-called navigator organizations that help people enroll will be cut from \$63 million last year to roughly \$37 million.

"The administration's decision will be especially consequential in the 39 states that use HealthCare.gov, the federal enrollment website. These states are more reliant on the federal government to fund outreach, unlike the predominantly blue states that operate their own health insurance exchanges and have dedicated budgets for outreach." <http://politi.co/2wrYexj>

-- **"Trump expected to halt Obama's program but allow some Dreamers to stay temporarily,"** by McClatchy's Anita Kumar and Franco Ordoñez: "President Donald Trump is expected to end an Obama-era program that shielded young people from deportation, but he will likely let the immigrants known as Dreamers stay in the United States until their work permits run out, according to multiple people familiar with the policy negotiation.

"That plan would allow Trump to fulfill a campaign promise to end one of Barack Obama's signature initiatives while also giving the president a way to keep the pledge he made after Inauguration Day to treat the Dreamers with "great heart," said sources on both sides of the issue who are involved in the discussions. An announcement could come as soon as Friday, just days before a deadline imposed by 10 states that threatened to sue the U.S. government if it did not stop protecting people brought into the country illegally as children." <http://bit.ly/2iLo506>

-- **FWD.US** released a letter signed by the leaders of Marriott, Facebook, Microsoft, GM, Apple, Amazon, Google, Visa, Warren Buffett and more opposed to ending DACA. **The letter** <http://bit.ly/2wWaOs2>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "World in no rush to offer Trump help post-Harvey," by Nahal Toosi: "As soon as Hurricane Harvey hit, Mexico -- a country described by President Donald Trump as a source of rapists and drugs -- stepped up to offer boats, food and other aid to the United States. Another offer of help came from Venezuela, a country in severe political and economic crisis that has been repeatedly sanctioned by the Trump administration; it said it could give \$5 million in aid. The European Union has proudly noted that it is sharing its satellite mapping with U.S. emergency responders dealing the Harvey's devastation. This despite Trump's chastisement of European countries he views as overly dependent on the U.S. military. Then there's tiny Taiwan, which has reportedly offered \$800,000 in aid - a number likely calculated to annoy China as much as to curry favor with Trump.

"But compared to past crises, the list of foreign governments lining up to help the United States this time is relatively short for the time being. And the few countries that have raised their hand may get more out of it - politically, at least - than the U.S. The relative dearth of global goodwill, some analysts say, may stem from anger at Trump over his 'America First' approach to the world, which has irked even staunch U.S. allies." <http://politi.co/2vPoCPL>

-- MATTIS SPEAKS, via Michael Gordon of the NYT: **"Mattis Insists He and Trump Are on the Same Page on North Korea":** "I was asked if there are any diplomatic efforts left, and I said, 'Of course,' Mr. Mattis said. 'And diplomatic can include economic sanctions, not just talking. It didn't contradict anything the president said.' 'I agree with the president we should not be talking right now to a nation that's firing missiles over the top of Japan, an ally,' Mr. Mattis added." <http://nyti.ms/2xC32k3>

***** **A message from the American Bankers Association:** Nearly 9 in 10 Americans surveyed say it's important to have banks of all sizes. They recognize that the diversity of America's banks is a source of strength for our \$18 trillion economy. Learn more: <http://politi.co/2qcsGrg> *****

PALACE INTRIGUE -- "During a summer of crisis, Trump chafes against criticism and new controls," by WaPo's Phil Rucker and Ashley Parker: "Behind the scenes during a summer of crisis ... Trump appears to pine for the days when the Oval Office was a bustling hub of visitors and gossip, over which he presided as impresario. He fumes that he does not get the credit he thinks he deserves from the media or the allegiance from fellow Republican leaders he says he is owed. He boasts about his presidency in superlatives, but confidants privately fret about his suddenly dark moods.

"And some of Trump's friends fear that the short-tempered president is on an inevitable collision course with White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly. Trump chafes at some of the retired Marine Corps general's moves to restrict access to him since he took the job almost a month ago, said several people close to the president. They run counter to Trump's love of spontaneity and brashness, prompting some Trump loyalists to derisively dub Kelly 'the church lady' because they consider him strict and morally

superior. ... Meanwhile, people close to the president said he is simmering with displeasure over what he considers personal disloyalty from National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn ... He also has grown increasingly frustrated with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson ...

"Friends used to be able to call the White House and be patched directly through to Trump; now those calls are routed through Kelly and do not always make it to the president. Friends used to drop by the West Wing when they had time to kill, wandering to the Oval Office to say hello; now they must have an official appointment - and a clear reason - to visit. The changes are largely welcomed by senior administration officials, who say the president's time is too valuable to be wasted on chitchat and hangers-on. ... The president continues to call business friends and outside advisers, including former chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, from his personal phone when Kelly is not around, said people with knowledge of the calls." <http://wapo.st/2iKM9jP>

ALEX ISENSTADT SCOOP -- "RNC chief of staff resigns amid rash of departures": "Sara Armstrong, the top staffer at the [RNC], is departing, according to three people familiar with the move - the latest in a string of exits from the committee. Armstrong, the RNC's chief of staff, is exiting to take a senior-level job at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. She had been serving in the chief of staff role since early this year after helping to oversee President Donald Trump's inauguration planning. Richard Walters, the RNC finance director, will serve as interim chief of staff while the committee seeks a permanent replacement. RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel has begun that search." <http://politi.co/2xCjBfS>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "Mueller Enlists the IRS for His Trump-Russia Investigation," by The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff: "Special counsel Bob Mueller has teamed up with the IRS. According to sources familiar with his investigation into alleged Russian election interference, his probe has enlisted the help of agents from the IRS' Criminal Investigations unit. This unit-known as CI-is one of the federal government's most tight-knit, specialized, and secretive investigative entities. Its 2,500 agents focus exclusively on financial crime, including tax evasion and money laundering. A former colleague of Mueller's said he always liked working with IRS' special agents, especially when he was a U.S. Attorney. And it goes without saying that the IRS has access to Trump's tax returns-documents that the president has long resisted releasing to the public." <http://thebea.st/2wsI07s>

-- AP: "Russia says it's studying U.S. decision to shut its consulate": "Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says Moscow has yet to study the United States' decision to shut its consulate in San Francisco before considering possible retaliation.

"The U.S. on Thursday abruptly ordered Russia to shutter its San Francisco consulate and close offices in Washington and New York within the next 48 hours, intensifying tensions between the former Cold War foes. The Trump administration described its action as retaliation for the Kremlin's "unwarranted and detrimental" demand earlier this month that the U.S. cut its diplomatic staff in Russia. Speaking at

Russia's top diplomacy school on Friday, Lavrov said Moscow would react to the decision once it has finished analyzing it. Lavrov defended Russia's decision to cut U.S. diplomatic staff as reciprocal reaction to the U.S. expelling Russian diplomats last December." <http://bit.ly/2euCP2c>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Outgoing sheriff Clarke expected to take job in Trump administration," by Andrew Restuccia, Josh Dawsey, and Eliana Johnson: "David Clarke, the controversial outgoing sheriff of Milwaukee County, Wis., is expected to take a job in the Trump administration, according to two sources familiar with the matter. Clarke resigned as sheriff on Thursday. A regular presence on Fox News, Clarke has become a well-known figure in conservative circles in recent years. He is also an avowed supporter of President Donald Trump, and he spoke at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland last year. But he has come under fierce criticism amid a series of deaths in the Milwaukee County prison, including that of Terrill Thomas, who died of dehydration last year after guards turned off the water in his cell.

"Trump has been one of Clarke's most vocal cheerleaders, and even promoted his book on Twitter earlier this month. It's unclear what job Clarke will take in the administration, but one of the sources said he's expected to join the White House. Clarke likely won't be offered a Senate-confirmed role because his nomination would face opposition from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. 'We have no announcement at this time,' White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said. In a text message, Clarke said, 'Will talk about my future plans next week.'" <http://politi.co/2vNOLyC>

THE NEW 20-DOLLAR BILL -- "Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin just put Harriet Tubman's role on the \$20 bill in question" - CNBC: "Mnuchin told CNBC on Thursday: 'Ultimately we will be looking at this issue. It's not something I'm focused on at the moment.' Instead, he said he was concentrating on making sure any tweaks to U.S. currency bills thwart counterfeiters." <http://cnb.cx/2wX8Ffs>

PLAYBOOK ON THE ROAD -- A VERY BIG THANK YOU to everyone who sent in photos this past month. It has been a blast to see so many readers keep up with Playbook during adventures around the world. Thank you for making Playbook the amazing community it is and helping us continue to grow and expand our reach.

THIS WEEK'S FEATURED PHOTOS: Ilya Shapiro, senior fellow in constitutional studies at the Cato Institute and editor-in-chief of the Cato Supreme Court Review: "Me at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort in Bernalillo, NM." **Photo credit: former AZ State Rep. Adam Kwasman** <http://politi.co/2gojblb> ... **Suzanne Struglinski, director of membership engagement, National Press Club:** "Greetings from the Stella Maris lodge in Tanzania -- the school children are starting their day and I am starting mine, coffee and Playbook. Using up the last hours of WiFi before heading out to climb Kilimanjaro on Friday." <http://politi.co/2gv2QyY> ... **Herbie Ziskend, VP at SKDKnickerbocker and an Obama WH alum:** "@playbookplus I've succumbed to entering into the drawing (from the cafe car!) #playbookloyal". <http://politi.co/2vwXGJv> ... **Jade Chee Riopelle:** "Reading about the threats from North Korea in Playbook, while

vacationing in Seoul, South Korea." <http://politi.co/2xC9vvl> ... **Karen Collins:** "Reading Playbook to [the statue of Mexican] General Mariano Vallejo on the Sonoma Plaza. He was very interested and, I might say, horrified to hear about Trumpism. He was heartened to hear that California was leading the resistance." <http://politi.co/2eKhX40>

Other Playbookers sent in pictures of themselves reading Playbook in Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, Wall Street, Southwest Harbor, Maine, Chichester, England, Quogue, N.Y., Canyon Sainte-Anne, outside Quebec City, the Athabasca Glacier in Alberta, Canada, the Grand Tetons, Madison, Wisc., Paintbrush Canyon in Grand Teton National Park, Zion National Park, San Diego, the Moab in Utah, Cortland NY, Raleigh, NC, Grand Traverse Bay, Michigan, up high in the Andes in Bogota, Colombia, Brentwood, TN, Yankees Stadium, Santiago, Chile, Edinburgh, Scotland. **The full gallery** <http://politi.co/2gulRA>

THE JUICE ...

-- **NORTH TEXAS DAILY:** "Donald Trump Jr. will be paid \$100,000 to speak at the University of North Texas' Kuehne Speaker Series on Oct. 24, according to executed contracts between UNT and Trump Jr. obtained by the North Texas Daily through a Freedom of Information Act request. The university has not yet executed a contract for the venue, although the contract lists the location as AT&T Stadium."

<http://bit.ly/2eJVZ0T>

THE FRIDAY NIGHT CONVERSATION -- BOB COSTA'S "WASHINGTON WEEK"

GUESTS: Phil Rucker, Abby Livingston, Geoff Bennett and Jeanne Cummings

TRUMP'S FRIDAY -- Trump is speaking on the phone with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan at 11 a.m. At 1 p.m., he will receive an update on Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Deidra Cate (left) hugs Vice President Mike Pence at the First Baptist church of Rockport, Texas, on Aug. 31. Cate said parents are extremely concerned about the state of the schools in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and want to get them running as soon as possible. | Rachel Denny Clow/Corpus Christi Caller-Times, via AP

VALLEY TALK -- "Garcetti isn't ruling out a 2018 run for governor or senator in California," by Isaac Dove: "Eric Garcetti started the week toying with a 2020 presidential run on a trip to New Hampshire, but the Los Angeles mayor is still keeping his options open for a 2018 run closer to home. That includes next year's open governor's race, and possibly a Senate race, should Sen. Dianne Feinstein decide not

to seek a fifth term. 'I never say no,' Garcetti said this week when asked about the governor's race, which he said he'll make a decision about in September. 'I realize that I need to, because I have enough people who have said, 'Are you in that race, or not?' I need to definitively give them an answer. I need to definitively think it through.'"

<http://politi.co/2guS0cb>

MICK MULVANEY PROFILE - MICHAEL GRUNWALD in the Sept./Oct. POLITICO 50 issue of POLITICO Magazine, **"Mick the Knife:** The most important player in Trump's government is the one most committed to slashing it to the bone. Meet Mick Mulvaney, who proudly calls himself a 'right-wing nutjob' and is quietly-and radically-trying to dismantle the federal bureaucracy": "Mick Mulvaney, President Donald Trump's budget director, walked into the Oval Office in early May on a longshot mission. The slash-government conservative wanted to persuade the president to break one of his most popular campaign promises. During his populist run for the White House, Trump had vowed to leave Social Security and Medicare alone. ...

"Mick the Knife brought a cut list to his meeting in the Oval. 'Look, this is my idea on how to reform Social Security,' the former South Carolina congressman began. 'No!' the president replied. 'I told people we wouldn't do that. What's next?' 'Well, here are some Medicare reforms,' Mulvaney said. 'No!' Trump repeated. 'I'm not doing that.' 'OK, disability insurance.' This was a clever twist. Mulvaney was talking about the Social Security Disability Insurance program, which, as its full name indicates, is part of Social Security. But Americans don't tend to think of it as Social Security, and its 11 million beneficiaries are not the senior citizens who tend to support Trump. 'Tell me about that,' Trump replied. 'It's welfare,' Mulvaney said. 'OK, we can fix welfare,' Trump declared.

"Sure enough, the Trump budget plan that Mulvaney unveiled a few weeks later would cut about \$70 billion in disability benefits over a decade, mostly through unspecified efforts to get recipients back to work. That may sound like welfare reform, but the program isn't welfare for the poor; it's insurance for workers who pay into Social Security through payroll taxes. The episode suggests Trump was either ignorant enough to get word-gamed into attacking a half-century-old guarantee for the disabled, or cynical enough to ditch his promise to protect spending when it didn't benefit his base."

<http://politi.co/2iL3AAN>

SPOTTED: Mick Mulvaney and a group of staffers having dinner and drinks at Mission last night

TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE -- "Trump not rushing to find a permanent head for DHS," by Andrew Restuccia and Eliana Johnson: "A month after former Homeland Security secretary John Kelly decamped for the White House, President Donald Trump has yet to formally interview any potential candidates to replace the retired general as the head of the department. With large swaths of Texas underwater and top staffers focused on pushing tax reform, the president is taking his time filling the vacant Cabinet post at DHS. Though White House aides have whittled the contenders down to a final shortlist, it could be weeks before Trump finalizes his choice, according to a senior

administration official and a homeland security expert familiar with the conversations."
<http://politi.co/2eo51QA>

--"Trump Energy official who said controversial comments were result of hacking resigns," by CNN's Andrew Kaczynski: "William C. Bradford, a Trump administration appointee who heads the Energy Department's Office of Indian Energy, resigned Thursday after claiming this week inflammatory comments that appeared to have been made by him online were the result of hacking. ... CNN's KFile reported this week on evidence that suggested that Bradford made inflammatory comments through an account on the online commenting service Disqus. In response to the story, Bradford told CNN's KFile that he couldn't comment 'on an ongoing federal investigation into multiple cyber attacks and Internet crimes committed against me over the past several years, to include email intrusions, hacking, and impostors in social media.' The account that appeared to be Bradford questioned Obama's birth certificate and called the former president's mother 'a fourth-rate p&*n actress and w@!re.'" <http://cnn.it/2wrVCj1>

-- "Trump civil rights official listed Clinton attacks as qualification on resume," by Kim Hefling: "The controversial attorney who runs the Education Department's civil rights division cited her work attacking Bill and Hillary Clinton at the top of her resume when she applied to work for President Donald Trump, according to a copy of the document obtained by POLITICO. Candice Jackson, who brought a group of women who had accused President Bill Clinton of sexual misconduct to a presidential debate last year between Trump and Hillary Clinton, listed that event as one of her 'top five qualifications' for working in the administration.

"At the Education Department, Jackson has taken a prominent role helping Education Secretary Betsy DeVos shape federal policy pertaining to protections for transgender students and the handling of campus sexual assault cases. She drew fire in June for telling The New York Times that 90 percent of campus sexual assault cases 'fall into the category of "we were both drunk."' On her résumé, Jackson noted that she had steadfastly attacked Hillary Clinton's 'lifelong corruption and hypocritical claim to defend women and children' in ads and videos and brought a 'unique perspective due to also being a gay Republican.'" <http://politi.co/2vP65n3>

******* A message from the American Bankers Association:** America's banks play a critical role in generating economic growth while delivering safety and convenience for customers. The two million women and men who work for America's banks safeguard \$12.9 trillion in deposits and originate \$2.4 trillion in home loans. They provide \$331 billion in loans to small businesses and \$175 billion in loans to farmers and ranchers. Banks' fraud protection measures stop at least \$11 billion in attempted fraud each year. And thousands of banker volunteers deliver financial literacy lessons annually to millions of young Americans to help them become financially successful adults. Find out more at www.aba.com/AmericasBanks, #AmericasBanks *****

HMM -- "Trump Dumped U.S. Ambassador to Amman at Request of King," by Foreign Policy's Dan De Luce and Ruby Mellen: "Soon after taking office, President

Donald Trump pushed out the U.S. ambassador to Jordan after complaints from the country's king, even though there was no evidence the diplomat had misrepresented Washington's policies. King Abdullah II had expressed similar gripes to the previous administration, but President Barack Obama and his deputies rebuffed requests for the ambassador's removal, backing up Alice Wells, the career diplomat in the job, sources familiar with the events told Foreign Policy. Several former and current diplomats told FP that the Jordanian king had a tense relationship with Wells, mainly because he strongly objected to the Obama administration's pursuit of a nuclear agreement with Tehran." <http://atfp.co/2wWJeLb>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Republicans Want to Sideline This Regulator. But It May Be Too Popular," by NYT's Steve Eder, Jessica Silver-Greenberg and Stacy Cowley: "With the election of President Trump, the nation's consumer watchdog agency faced a quandary: how to shield the Obama-era institution from a Republican administration determined to loosen the federal government's grip on business. In the weeks after the election, Richard Cordray, the Democrat who leads the agency, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, directed his staff to compile stories from ordinary Americans thanking it for resolving complaints. The anecdotes, which he solicited in an email to share with the Trump transition team, could provide a counterpoint to critics who had cast the agency as a regulatory scourge on the economy. And implicit in his request to employees was the belief that some accolades would come from parts of the country that helped elect Mr. Trump - evidence that the popularity of consumer safeguards transcends party divisions." <http://nyti.ms/2gnWFJf>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Kris Kobach's new job: Columnist for Breitbart," by Kansas City Star's Bryan Lowry: "Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach is now a regular columnist on the far-right news site run by President Donald Trump's former chief strategist. Kobach, a candidate for Kansas governor who is running on a platform of combating illegal immigration, published his first article for Breitbart.com in June - a piece that tied refugees to terrorism. He has published six more pieces since then and more are on the horizon. Kobach, who previously hosted a talk radio show in Kansas City, said Breitbart approached him about writing a regular column in June. ... 'I get paid for my columns ... just like you're paid,' Kobach said when asked about compensation without specifying the amount he receives per column." <http://bit.ly/2wnrerl>

FIRST PERSON - "Death of Diana: Times Journalists Recall Night of the Crash," by Elisabeth Bumiller, Stephen Farrell, Warren Hoge, Sarah Lyall and Craig R. Whitney in the NYT: "The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, on Aug. 31, 1997, shook Britain and the world. The New York Times asked five journalists who covered the deadly car accident, which also killed Diana's companion, Dodi al-Fayed, and their driver, Henri Paul, to share their memories and reflections." <http://nyti.ms/2eohcwJ>

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- @anniekarni: "Obama and Malia just left dinner at Good Stuff Eatery on the Hill. Tiny surprised crowd on the sidewalk as he left." ... Agriculture Secretary Perdue at the Lindt USA headquarters in Stratham, NH yesterday - *pic*
<http://bit.ly/2wnRjqE>

SPOTTED at Tom Kaplan's birthday party last night at Right Proper Brewing Co: Zeke Miller, Matt Flegenheimer, Cassie Spodak, Vaughn Hillyard, Alan He, Lissandra Villa, Alexis Levinson, Walt Cronkite, Liz Goodwin, Rebecca Ruiz, Mary Ellen McIntire, Kailani Koenig, Josh Dawsey, Matt Nussbaum

RNC COMMS SHOP HIRES - Cassie Smedile has been named national press secretary and **Blair Ellis** as deputy national press secretary. Smedile most recently was comms director for Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.) and Ellis was a press secretary for the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

TRANSITION -- Sarah Demarest is joining "CBS This Morning" as a supervising producer, based in Washington. She most recently spent over a decade at the "Today Show".

CONGRATS -- Julie Eddy, Doris Matsui's chief of staff, an alum of the Clinton White House and a Cherokee, received the National Statesmanship Award from the Cherokee Nation last night. Both her children -- Henry, 7, and Lilly, 5 -- traveled to Tahlequah, OK at the Cherokee Nation for the ceremony. *Pic* <http://bit.ly/2wos6N3>

SUNDAY SO FAR - CBS' "Face the Nation" (guest host: Margaret Brennan): Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner ... Victor Cha. Political panel: Nancy Youssef, Margaret Talev, David Sanger, Ruth Marcus

--NBC's "Meet the Press": Sylvester Turner. Panel: Matthew Continetti, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., Susan Page, Kristen Welker

--"Fox News Sunday": Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Panel: Jason Chaffetz, Jeff Mason, Mike Needham, Marie Harf

--CNN's "Inside Politics" with John King: Michael Shear, Molly Ball, Karoun Demirjian, Sara Murray

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Dee Dee Myers, EVP and director of corporate communications at Warner Bros. and former WH press secretary. **What she's reading:** "I'm reading the manuscript of 'Something Wonderful: Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway Revolution' by Todd S. Purdum [Dee Dee's husband, who also works at POLITICO], due out March 6. It's a fascinating story of a partnership that was somehow unlikely and inevitable. Their music gained a foothold in the popular culture of its day that endures to this day -- and it changed American musical theater forever." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2wshbA3>

BIRTHDAYS: Steve Hildebrand ... Sam Salkin, the pride of 2140 G Street (hat tip: Joe from the Deli) ... WSJ's Kate Davidson ... Xochitl Hinojosa, DNC comms director (h/t hubby Eloy Martinez and Jesse Ferguson) ... Politico star Tara Palmeri ... Joe Toohey ... Liz Bartolomeo, comms director and senior adviser to Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) (h/t Heather Purcell) ... Sue Hensley, EVP of comms and public affairs at American Trucking Associations (h/ts Sean Spicer and Stuart Roy) ... Rep. Al Green (D-Tex.) ... former Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-Fla.) ... C-SPAN Capitol Hill producer Craig Caplan ... Bloomberg's Lauren Kiel ... Jackie Falk ... John Gundlach ... Yolanda Caraway ... Al Thomson ... Politico's John Samira ... Jillian Sobeck ... John Jones ... Radio free Asia chief Libby Liu ... BGR Dem chief Jonathan Mantz ... Neil Volz ... Alexander Thomson ... Wayne Crews ... MSNBC's Amitai Perline ... Sacramento Bee cartoonist Jack Ohman ... Kenny Mayne ... Mark Hudspeth, producer at "CBS Sunday Morning" ... Andrew Satter ... Jessica Estepa ... Patricia Barba ... Susie Saavedra ... McKinsey's Rahul Raina ...

... **Chris Fleming**, media engagement director at Smoot Tewe Group ... David Natonski ... Christopher Massicotte ... Alexandra Dufour ... Trevor Thomas ... Vanity Fair editor at large Cullen Murphy ... Courtney Jamieson Dorning ... Bear Tullis ... Connie Haddeland ... Karl Ahlgren ... Dan Bernal ... Teresa Martinez ... William Beutler ... Ryan Smith ... Kelly Plunnecke ... Debbie Price ... June Plunnecke ... Richard Howard ... Stephen Krasner ... Arsalan Iftikhar ... Christopher Healy ... Al Thompson ... Sigurd Neubauer ... Jason Atlee ... Chip Borman ... Ryuta Araki ... Eve Gittelsohn ... Eric Andersen ... Terry Nicolosi ... Grant Woodard (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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Daily Communications Report: EPA

TO: White House Cabinet Affairs Communications
FR: EPA Office of Public Affairs
DT: **Tuesday, August 1, 2017**

Upcoming Wednesday, August 2, 2017

State Action Tour continues in Indiana: Meeting with Gov. Holcomb, Tour of Mike Starkey Farms, WOTUS roundtable with stakeholders, CPP event at a Liberty Mine, phone-in taped interview w/ Tony Katz of WIBC Indianapolis.

Inquiries

HQ

- AP (Michael Biesecker); Agri-Pulse (Steve Davies); Argus (Chris Knight); BNA (Catherine Moran); Daily Caller (Chris White); CNN (Rene Marsh); and Law 360 (Keith Goldberg) Methane court ruling.
- AP (Robin McDowell) EPA's involvement with petcoke and shipment tracking.
- BNA (Sylvia Carignan) Inquiry regarding superfund program budgeting and program costs.
- E&E (Sean Reilly) Coal ash guidance.
- Politico (Alex Guillen) Seeking copies of air permit petitions.

Regional

- Delaware Public Radio – All Things Considered (Katie Piekas) Newark South Groundwater Plume.
- Charleston Gazette-Mail (Ken Ward) Regarding news release on cleanup plan for Kanawha River SF site; Can I get a copy of the settlement? Also asked for estimated cost of the project and a timeline for starting and completion
- WNEM-TV 5 (Mark Silberstein) Re: clarification about past SRF debt forgiveness in Flint.

Top Issues and Accomplishments

Region 3 Press Release: Maryland Plan to Improve Water Quality

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-backs-maryland-plan-improve-water-quality>

Region 5 Press Release: EPA Announces Michigan Can Forgive Flint's Past Drinking Water Debt <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-michigan-can-forgive-flints-past-drinking-water-debt>

Top Stories

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy

and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next

year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

'Behind the Scenes'

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler

by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

To: AO OPA Individual News Clips[AO_OPA_Ind_News_Clips@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Mon 5/7/2018 2:36:48 PM
Subject: Politico: Upheaval at Pruitt's EPA as departures mount, 5/6/18

Politico

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/386281-upheaval-at-pruitts-epa-as-departures-mount>

Upheaval at Pruitt's EPA as departures mount

By Miranda Green, 5/6/18, 6:00 AM

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) appears to be in a state of massive upheaval following the departure of several aides and new allegations against the agency's embattled administrator, Scott Pruitt.

Four officials at the agency have stepped down in the past week, an exodus that has deprived Pruitt of some of his closest aides.

Meanwhile, several new controversies have exploded around Pruitt regarding his travel and his ties to lobbyists.

People with knowledge of the departures at EPA likened them to getting out of Dodge, either due to impending investigations or simply a desire to escape a tumultuous work environment. One source described the offices at EPA as "eerily quiet" this week.

The first resignation came Tuesday, when Albert Kelly, a close friend of Pruitt's who was hired to lead the EPA's Superfund program, announced his departure.

The week before Kelly's resignation, two Democratic House members had asked EPA's inspector general to investigate Kelly's qualifications and "unexplained red flags." Once someone leaves government employment, the inspector general's office cannot compel someone

to comply with an investigation.

Lawmakers became interested in Kelly after it emerged in December that he had been banned for life from working in the banking sector. Reports also asserted that Kelly had helped get Pruitt financing for a mortgage and to buy a minor league baseball team.

Tuesday also brought the departure of Pruitt's head of security, Pasquale Perrotta, a career official who previously worked at the Secret Service. He said he was leaving the EPA because press coverage was taking a toll on his family.

Perrotta's resignation came the day before he was to testify in front of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which is looking into various incidents at the EPA.

Perrotta had been under the microscope for decisions he'd made as Pruitt's security chief as well as reports that he used his power to influence a number of EPA security contracts, including an April 2017 security sweep in the administrator's office completed by his business partner at an outside security group.

EPA's Office of Inspector General announced in late April that they were investigating Pruitt's "use of staff and expenditures for security measures."

Kevin Chmielewski, a former EPA political aide turned whistleblower, alleged to lawmakers in early April that Perrotta retaliated against him at EPA when he had pushed back on Pruitt's travel expenses.

Chmielewski told lawmakers that in February he returned from a work trip to Japan to find his office locked and credentials revoked. Perrotta later called him, he said, and demanded he also return his parking pass, saying he would personally go to Chmielewski's home to forcibly retrieve it.

By the end of the week, members of Pruitt's communications team were also jumping ship.

On Thursday, Pruitt's top public affairs official, Liz Bowman, announced she was leaving the agency to join Sen. Joni Ernst's (R-Iowa) communications department on Capitol Hill.

She would not say how long the move had been planned, but said "it was time."

The next day, the press office's second in command, John Konkus, announced he was also leaving, this time to take a position at the Small Business Administration.

Konkus had previously been named in a report as the EPA staffer tasked with sifting through EPA grant awards to make sure they didn't conflict with the Trump administration's deregulatory goals.

Pruitt's tenure has been marked by controversy, a storm of accusations that he denounced in congressional testimony as "fiction" concocted by his opponents.

Among other things, Pruitt has faced scrutiny for frequently traveling first class on business trips, for utilizing a round-the-clock security team even on personal trips and for renting a room from the wife of a then-lobbyist in Washington.

When lawmakers pressed him about those accusations and others in his late April testimony, Pruitt often shifted blame to top aides and denied knowledge of things that were done on his behalf — including significant raises given to two EPA aides who came to D.C. with Pruitt from Oklahoma, where he had been attorney general.

Since the testimony, the EPA has faced a new onslaught of negative headlines. Reports have broadly asserted that Pruitt and EPA political aides had planned multiple foreign trips for the administrator with help from lobbyists and consultants who had business interests abroad.

Amid the negative headlines and staff turnover, The Atlantic reported that Michael Abboud, a member of the EPA's press team, had been shopping a negative story about Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in an attempt to take the heat off Pruitt. A source with knowledge of the reported incident confirmed to The Hill that Abboud was pitching the negative story.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox has called the report "categorically false."

Abboud previously worked at America Rising, a conservative opposition research group. He's also related to Andy Abboud, senior vice president of government relations and community development for billionaire Sheldon Adelson's Las Vegas Sands Corporation. Adelson is a prominent Republican donor.

Adelson figured predominantly in helping Pruitt plan a scheduled February trip to Israel, the Washington Post reported late Thursday. The trip was canceled after controversy erupted over Pruitt's use of first-class air travel.

Andy Abboud confirmed to the Post his own involvement in planning Pruitt's Israel agenda.

A House Democratic aide said that it would be hard to tell just how lawmakers will respond to the latest events once they come back from recess Monday, but suggested the latest developments have cast a cloud over Pruitt's testimony in late April. Specifically, the aide pointed out that Pruitt had testified that the agency did not retaliate against internal whistleblowers, despite Chmielewski alleging the contrary, and had said his real estate dealings with lobbyists weren't serious, despite new reports that he had once co-owned a home with one.

"If we were in the majority now, we'd be accusing him of perjury," the aide said.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: jazz shaw
Sent: Thur 3/22/2018 3:28:46 PM
Subject: Re: EPA Int'l Travel

You really did me a solid on that one. Mike Reed from the RNC sent my column out in a mass mailing this morning. Really good hit for us. Thanks!

J

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 2:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Incredible - can't wait

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 21, 2018, at 2:34 PM, jazz shaw <jazzshaw@gmail.com> wrote:

Want a good laugh? While writing this up I noticed that the Washington Post quoted somebody yesterday bitching about Pruitt stopping at the Vatican during the G7 trip. When Gina McCarthy went to Italy in 2015, guess where she went? ;-)

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/231297-epa-chief-talks-climate-with-pope-francis>

Thanks for the tip. This is going to be a great article. Later I'll dig for some other sightseeing she did. We might make this a weekly series for a while.

J

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 1:24 PM, jazz shaw <jazzshaw@gmail.com> wrote:

Okay. When you said "do not post" that sort of threw me off.

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 1:22 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

You can use the statement, please do. Just sharing the spreadsheets (see attachment) as a form of verification.

From: jazz shaw [mailto:jazzshaw@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 1:22 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: EPA Int'l Travel

So don't use the statement from you?

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 1:19 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Please do not post – you can report on it – attached is the spreadsheet for verification about McCarthy and Jackson.

From: jazz shaw [mailto:jazzshaw@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 1:12 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: EPA Int'l Travel

Niiiiiiiiice

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 12:18 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Jazz –

The Associated Press and a few other liberal organizations have been obsessed with creating a controversy surrounding the cost to protect EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt during his G-7 meetings in Italy. During the Obama Administration when EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy traveled to Italy, these news outlets never bothered to submit a public information request (FOIA) or report on the costs of her travel.

In fact, during her tenure at the EPA, McCarthy incurred numerous security related expenses for her trips to: Paris, Dubai, Tokyo, Costa Rica, Rio De Janeiro, Austria, Peru, Ghana and Rome.

Below is a statement that you are welcome to use along with the costs for the international trips that McCarthy and Jackson too.

“The double-standard couldn’t be more clear: under Barack Obama’s EPA the media chose not to report on expenditures to protect the EPA Administrator for international travel or the costs of their trips, but under the Trump Administration the costs to protect our government officials is somehow scandalous.” EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND ...

In 2017, Scott Pruitt and his security detail spent \$84,000 to travel to the G7 Summit in Italy. ([Washington Examiner](#), 03/20/18)

In 2017, Scott Pruitt and his staff spent \$40,000 to travel to Morocco. ([The Associated Press](#), 12/15/17)

In 2016, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$68,382 to travel to Ghana. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2016, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$45,139 to travel to Peru. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2016, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$74,737 to travel to Tokyo. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$41,320 to travel to Paris. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$90,367 to travel to Dubai. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$67,702 to travel to Tokyo. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$56,192 to travel to Italy. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2014, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent

\$62,246 to travel to Vancouver. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2014, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$68,267 to travel to Vietnam. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2013, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$55,384 to travel to China. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2012, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$64,963 to travel to Israel. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2011, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$59,950 to travel to Rio De Janeiro. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2011, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$51,435 to travel to Montreal. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2011, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$155,763 to travel to China. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

###

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Mon 10/23/2017 10:19:49 PM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

What do you say?

On Mon, Oct 23, 2017 at 2:55 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

What do you mean such little press, we just did an interview with Time (20 minutes), Houston Chronicle, Fox 26 Houston, CBS 11 in Lincoln and a radio interview in Nebraska - all last week.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 23, 2017, at 5:35 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Jahan, I'd like to put in for an interview with Administrator Pruitt. It seems odd to me that a public official does so little press. All I'd like to do is ask him some very basic questions about his vision for the EPA. Thanks.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 1:21 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

No, this response is to your query.

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 4:19 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

I don't think this response is to my query. I was specifically asking about administrator's visits --- or lack thereof -- to EPA regional offices.

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." (NTK Network, Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com] **On**
Behalf Of Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

--

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Wed 8/30/2017 6:20:45 PM
Subject: WH Weekly Report
Daily Communications Report 8 28 17.docx

Team: Attached is the weekly WH report for your review.

Thank you,

John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

Daily Communications Report: EPA

TO: White House Cabinet Affairs Communications
FR: EPA Office of Public Affairs
DT: **Monday, August 28, 2017**

Upcoming Tuesday, August 29, 2017: Continued focus on Harvey response.

~~(8/29) Admin Pruitt: State Action Tour continues in Kentucky. Canceled.~~

~~(8/31-9/6) Admin Pruitt visit to Australia. Canceled.-~~

Inquiries

HQ

ABC (Stephanie Ebbs); AP (Carla K. Johnson); BNA (David Schultz); CQ Roll Call (Elvina Nawaguna); Reuters (Emily Flitter); S&P Global (Meghan Gordon); Texas Tribune (Jim Malewitz) EPA's role in managing Hurricane Harvey.

BuzzFeed (Zahri Hirji) Seeking clarification regarding EPA emergency fuel waiver for Texas release.

Politico (Alex Guillen); New York Times (Lisa Friedman); Washington Post (Chris Mooney) - Seeking comment on EPA dropping sponsorship of Climate Leadership Awards and Conference.

Politico (Eric Wolff) Inquiry regarding Administrator's recent comments on RFS conventional ethanol cap.

Washington Post (Dan Zak) Seeking confirmation on delay of RMP rules under new administration.

Regional

The New York Times (Andy Newman) Reporter requesting updates on the Gowanus Canal Superfund site cleanup.

Times Beacon Record Newspapers (Alex Petroski) Reporter requesting a comment from EPA regarding New York State's lawsuit involving EPA's dumping plan of dredged materials in the Long Island Sound, and local municipalities like Brookhaven Town coming out in support of the state's lawsuit.

WHNT 19 (Huntsville, AL) (Olivia Steen) Reporter asked if Denali Water Solutions and Moccasin Bend Waste Water Treatment Plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee are regulated by EPA.

Top Stories

Reuters: U.S. EPA issues 2nd fuel waiver as Harvey threatens to cause shortages

<http://www.reuters.com/article/storm-harvey-fuel-idUSL2N1LC0OB>

Breitbart: EPA's Pruitt: Administration Acutely Focused on Hurricane Harvey; Response Going Well Thus Far <http://www.breitbart.com/radio/2017/08/28/epas-pruitt-administration-acutely-focused-on-hurricane-harvey-response-going-well-thus-far/>

NTK Network: EPA Employee Used Trump Budget as Retirement Excuse, But Emails Say Otherwise <http://ntknetwork.com/epa-employee-used-trump-budget-as-retirement-excuse-but-emails-say-otherwise/>

Washington Examiner: EPA holds fall meeting blitz on rolling back water rule

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-holds-fall-meeting-blitz-on-rolling-back-water-rule/article/2632600>

The Hill: EPA cancels sponsorship of awards for climate leadership <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/348026-epa-cancels-sponsorship-of-climate-leadership-awards>

Top Issues and Accomplishments

EPA Emergency Operations Centers in Washington, DC, Dallas, TX and Atlanta, GA have been activated.

Issued Press Releases:

EPA Ready to Support FEMA, State Efforts on Hurricane Harvey:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-ready-support-fema-state-efforts-hurricane-harvey>

EPA Approves Emergency Fuel Waiver for Texas: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-approves-emergency-fuel-waiver-texas>

EPA Approves TCEQ Request to Expand Emergency Fuel Waiver:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-approves-tceq-request-expand-emergency-fuel-waiver>

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 9:10:56 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

It's been sent and we included the editorial in this morning's roundup.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 5:10 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Include the Oklahoman editorial

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:39 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

I've replaced the Hill story with the updated version. Otherwise good to send?

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:34 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Here is the updated Flint one: <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

From: Hewitt, James

Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:13 PM

To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>; Graham, Amy <[graham.amy@epa.gov](mailto: graham.amy@epa.gov)>; Ferguson, Lincoln <[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov](mailto: ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov)>; Konkus, John <[konkus.john@epa.gov](mailto: konkus.john@epa.gov)>; Wilcox, Jahan <[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov](mailto: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov)>; Abboud, Michael <[abboud.michael@epa.gov](mailto: abboud.michael@epa.gov)>

Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Forgot the attachment.

From: Hewitt, James

Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM

To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>; Graham, Amy <[graham.amy@epa.gov](mailto: graham.amy@epa.gov)>; Ferguson, Lincoln <[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov](mailto: ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov)>; Konkus, John <[konkus.john@epa.gov](mailto: konkus.john@epa.gov)>; Wilcox, Jahan <[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov](mailto: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov)>; Abboud, Michael <[abboud.michael@epa.gov](mailto: abboud.michael@epa.gov)>

Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra

Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure,

leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his

hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO₂ is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about

carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that is has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

“In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

“Forgiving Flint’s past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city’s water system over time,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. “Forgiving the city’s debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint’s water system to continue.”

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness “will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns.”

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

James Hewitt

Environmental Protection Agency

Special Advisor for Public Affairs

(202) 578-6141

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Mon 10/23/2017 9:57:47 PM
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Okay, so do one with us.

On Mon, Oct 23, 2017 at 2:55 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

What do you mean such little press, we just did an interview with Time (20 minutes), Houston Chronicle, Fox 26 Houston, CBS 11 in Lincoln and a radio interview in Nebraska - all last week.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 23, 2017, at 5:35 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Jahan, I'd like to put in for an interview with Administrator Pruitt. It seems odd to me that a public official does so little press. All I'd like to do is ask him some very basic questions about his vision for the EPA. Thanks.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 1:21 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

No, this response is to your query.

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 4:19 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

I don't think this response is to my query. I was specifically asking about administrator's visits --- or lack thereof -- to EPA regional offices.

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

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EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On**
Behalf Of Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 8/29/2017 10:33:56 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the American Bankers Association: TRUMP heads to Texas as epic floods continue -- POTUS 'unusually silent' after top aides challenge him -- REMEMBERING MICHAEL CROMARTIE -- MICHAEL SCHERER to WaPo -- B'DAY: Neil Gorsuch

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the American Bankers Association

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

[Listen to the Playbook Audio Briefing](#)

Driving the Day

Good Tuesday morning. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP is headed to Texas at 8:30 a.m. to survey the devastation in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. **THE PLAN:** Trump will arrive in Corpus Christi, receive a briefing, and then head to Austin for a tour of the Emergency Operations Center and a meeting with the state's leaders.

-- UNDER THE DOME: D.C. IS BEGINNING TO TURN ITS ATTENTION to the likelihood that it will have to pass a massive emergency spending bill to help rebuild Houston. It will take a while for Texas and the federal government to fully assess its needs. But President Trump yesterday promised "rapid action from Congress," not to mention his vow that the water-logged state will be "up and running very, very quickly," something that emergency managers and Texas officials have pushed back on.

A FEW PATHS THE LEGISLATING CAN TAKE, per insiders we've spoken to: Congress can provide an initial down payment by passing the first installment of cash for Texas. That would give lawmakers the opportunity to show they're on top of the situation, while leaving open the possibility that they'd have to pass a second -- and larger -- bill. This has upsides and downsides. Upside: it shows immediate action. Downside: Congress would have to act twice. It's hard enough for the institution to do something once.

Another option is to attach a disaster relief bill to a government funding measure. Upside: As long as the bill didn't include funding for the border wall, this would help ease the passage of a bill to fund the government and could stop a September shutdown. Downside: Any time Congress lops one measure onto another something could go wrong.

-- **THE REALITY**, via Julie Turkewitz in Houston, Richard Perez-Pena in New York and Jack Healy in San Antonio with Dave Montgomery in Austin, Dave Philipps in San Antonio, John Schwartz in New Orleans and Henry Fountain in New York, on A1 of the the NYT: "Local, state and federal officials conceded that the scale of the crisis was so vast that they were nowhere near being able to measure it, much less fully address it. Across a region that is home to millions of people and includes Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city, no one has a clear idea how many people are missing, how many evacuated, how many hunkered down or were trapped in their waterlogged homes, or how many inundated houses and vehicles are beyond saving." <http://nyti.ms/2wFm5MD>

-- **L.A. TIMES**: "By Monday evening, the death toll had risen to nine. Officials in Harris County, which includes Houston, reported at least six 'potentially storm-related' fatalities. A 60-year-old woman died Monday in Porter, a small community north of Houston, when a large oak fell on her mobile home. Another person died in the small coastal town of Rockport, near where Harvey made landfall. A 52-year-old homeless man was found in La Marque, a small city near Galveston." <http://lat.ms/2gldb0n>

HOUSTON POLICE CHIEF ART ACEVEDO to the AP: "We know in these kind of events that, sadly, the death toll goes up historically. I'm really worried about how many bodies we're going to find."

PULLING BACK THE LENS -- "Bracing for Harvey's return, worry renews: Is worst to come?," by AP's Michael Graczyk and David Phillip in Houston: "The disaster is unfolding on an epic scale, with the nation's fourth-largest city mostly paralyzed by the storm that has parked itself over the Gulf Coast. With nearly 2 more feet of rain expected on top of the 30-plus inches in some places, authorities worried the worst might be yet to come. The Houston metro area covers about 10,000 square miles, an area slightly bigger than New Jersey. It's crisscrossed by about 1,700 miles of channels, creeks and bayous that drain into the Gulf of Mexico, about 50 miles to the southeast from downtown.

"The storm is generating an amount of rain that would normally be seen only once in more than 1,000 years, said Edmond Russo, a deputy district engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers, which was concerned that floodwater would spill around a pair of 70-year-old reservoir dams that protect downtown Houston." <http://bit.ly/2vo9i1v>

-- **UNBELIEVABLE STATS** in today's **HOUSTON CHRONICLE**: "Tropical Storm Harvey was producing 1 to 2 inches of rain per hour Tuesday morning, which would ultimately worsen the city's flooding problem, according to the National Weather Service." ... "The amount of water expected to hit Fort Bend County by late Tuesday could reach levels seen only about once every 800 years."

-- **WHAT YOU'LL HEAR A LOT ABOUT IN THE COMING DAYS: "Storm water starts rising in neighborhoods near Addicks and Barker dams,"** by the Houston Chronicle's John Harden and Lindsay Ellis: "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began releasing water from the Addicks and Barker reservoirs early Monday morning, hours

before officials planned to release rainfall from the two dams, according to the Harris County Flood Control District.

"The flood control district reported almost an hour later that storm water has started rising in the neighborhoods adjacent to Addicks and Barker. Heavy rainfall forced reservoir officials to begin releasing water from the dams sooner than previously planned. Col. Lars N. Zetterstrom with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had announced late Sunday afternoon that rising levels in the two reservoirs would force authorities to release water from both dams. The rising tides within the dams are forcing the water to swell and spill upstream into neighboring communities that sit against the dams." <http://bit.ly/2wFpNpJ>

CLICKER -- "The Unprecedented Flooding in Houston, in Photos" - 28 pix on one page <http://theatln.tc/2vzWrW4>

***** **A message from the American Bankers Association:** Bank customers deserve both safety and convenience. That's why America's banks created innovative ways-like mobile banking and remote deposit-for you to safely access your money 24/7. And we're just getting started. Learn more: <http://politi.co/2w4RZRG> *****

MATT NUSSBAUM: "Trumpian branding meets national tragedy": "President Donald Trump has deployed his knack for marketing as Hurricane Harvey has ravaged Texas, calling the storm 'epic,' 'historic,' and the 'biggest ever.' 'Even experts have said they've never seen one like this!' Trump declared on Twitter. But Trump's showmanship is about to collide with the devastation on the ground as he heads to Texas on Tuesday, and while natural disasters usually call for a certain presidential demeanor, Trump's response so far has been distinctly his own." <http://politi.co/2vAp7hi>

THIS COULD BE A PROBLEM -- "Texas Republican vows to fight for flood insurance overhaul," by Zach Warmbrodt: "As his state's largest city is pounded by extreme rain, Rep. Jeb Hensarling is digging in his heels on a conservative vision for overhauling the heavily indebted National Flood Insurance Program, which protects millions from the risk of financial calamity. The Texas Republican, who as chairman of the House Financial Services Committee is spearheading efforts to revamp the program before it expires next month, will call on his colleagues to pass his proposal as soon as they return from recess.

"His committee has drafted legislation that would renew the program for five years but also shrink its footprint, make coverage more expensive for policyholders, and ease the pathway for private companies to sell their own flood insurance policies. Opponents say the changes would make coverage less accessible for many homeowners. ... In an interview Monday, as the devastation in Houston began to bring the policy issues to the fore, Hensarling said he was 'pressing on the accelerator' - not the brake. 'It's more urgent than ever we get this bill done,' he said.

"His characteristic steadfastness puts him at odds with other lawmakers, aides and

lobbyists who suggested Congress was more likely to advance a less ambitious flood insurance package, including potentially a short-term extension bill without significant reforms. 'Hurricane Harvey makes a rapid reauthorization of the NFIP - in its current form - more likely,' a House Republican leadership aide said. 'Considering the ongoing disaster in Texas and the fact we are not even halfway through hurricane season, I think there will be immense public and political pressure to get this finished.'

<http://politi.co/2wOgJzn>

-- HENSARLING HAS STRUGGLED for years with changes to the flood insurance program.

NORTH KOREA, UNCOWED -- WAPO'S ANNA FIFIELD in TOKYO: "North Korea launched a ballistic missile Tuesday morning that flew over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, the most brazen provocation of Kim Jong Un's five-year-long rule and one that elicited strong condemnation from U.S. allies Japan and South Korea.

"The launch poses a further challenge, in particular, to President Trump, who has made North Korea a favorite rhetorical target. Trump said earlier this month that he would make Kim 'truly regret' harming the United States or its allies. In Japan, the prime minister was visibly agitated by North Korea's actions. 'A missile launch across Japan is an outrageous act that poses an unprecedented, grave and serious threat, and significantly undermines the peace and security of the region,' Shinzo Abe said after an emergency national security council meeting. ...

"In Seoul, President Moon Jae-in, a liberal who has promoted engagement with Pyongyang, ordered an 'overwhelming show of force' in response to the missile launch. South Korea's military aircraft dropped eight bombs on a shooting range on the southern side of the border with North Korea." <http://wapo.st/2wepm4p>

THE BIG PICTURE, NYT A18 -- "Two Bankers Are Selling Trump's Tax Plan. Is Congress Buying?" by Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Kate Kelly: "Gary D. Cohn and Steven Mnuchin have spent months behind closed doors with Republican congressional leaders sketching the contours of an elaborate and politically difficult tax overhaul that is President Trump's top priority. ... Already, their ambitions have drifted from the president's original mark: A 15 percent corporate tax rate proposed in April is now likely to move to the 20 to 25 percent range, say two people familiar with the officials' recent thinking. And a proposed 35 percent ceiling on the highest personal income tax rate could be shelved altogether, leaving the current 39.6 percent cap intact.

"For Mr. Cohn and Mr. Mnuchin, quiet competitors since their days as new partners at Goldman Sachs more than two decades ago, the task is a consequential test of whether real-world experience in finance has equipped them to carry out a delicate political negotiation, and whether two Jewish New Yorkers who have been lavish supporters of Democrats can succeed in Mr. Trump's Washington. 'Goldman has thrived by hiring strong individuals with very different backgrounds and putting them together on a team,' Lloyd Blankfein, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs, said in an email. 'Gary and

Steven are both steeped in that tradition from their years working side by side on the trading floor -- not a bad training ground for the pressure cooker that is Washington.' ...

"In a meeting with a group of Senate Democrats this year, according to people who were present, Mr. Cohn jokingly dismissed concerns about the wisdom and cost of repealing the estate tax, remarking, 'Only morons pay the estate tax.' A source close to Mr. Cohn denied that he had used the word, saying he had been referring to 'rich people with really bad tax planning.'" <http://nyti.ms/2iEVQjO>

TRUMP V. HIS CABINET -- "Trump rejected China steel offer his officials backed," by FT's Demetri Sevastopulo and Shawn Donnan: "Donald Trump last month rejected a Chinese proposal to cut steel overcapacity despite it being endorsed by some of his top advisers, as he urged them instead to find ways to impose tariffs on imports from China. One week after the July G20 summit in Hamburg -- where Mr. Trump criticised China for flooding the world market with cheap steel -- Beijing proposed cutting steel overcapacity by 150m tonnes by 2022. But Mr. Trump twice rejected the deal, according to several people familiar with the internal debate. ... Wilbur Ross, U.S. commerce secretary, endorsed the deal and brought it to Mr. Trump, but the president rejected the proposal. Mr. Ross, a long-time friend of the president, floated the deal again the following week during the two-day meetings with Chinese vice-premier Wang Yang, but Mr. Trump once again refused to accept it." <http://on.ft.com/2xu5bhQ>

DEPT. OF BARK NO BITE -- "Trump unusually silent after aides challenge him," by Josh Dawsey, Ben White and Eliana Johnson: "President Donald Trump is not happy with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Gary Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, for publicly criticizing his response to violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. But it appears there is little he is planning to do about it, according to people who have spoken to him. The unusually direct challenges from a Cabinet secretary and senior administration official seemed to make little more than a surface ripple in the swirling melodrama of the Trump White House, even as the president fumed privately about it. ... Cohn told associates that he hadn't heard a word from the president about his supposed anger - and that he didn't regret one bit having made his comments." <http://politi.co/2vFswL1>

-- BUT, BUT, BUT ... "Trump Punishes Longtime Aide After Angry Phoenix Speech, Sources Say," by Bloomberg's Jen Jacobs and Kevin Cirilli: "Donald Trump was in a bad mood before he emerged for a confrontational speech in Arizona last week. TV and social media coverage showed that the site of his campaign rally, the Phoenix Convention Center, was less than full. Backstage, waiting in a room with a television monitor, Trump was displeased, one person familiar with the incident said: TV optics and crowd sizes are extremely important to the president.

"As his surrogates warmed up the audience, the expanse of shiny concrete eventually filled in with cheering Trump fans. But it was too late for a longtime Trump aide, George Gigicos, the former White House director of advance who had organized the event as a contractor to the [RNC]. Trump later had his top security aide, Keith

Schiller, inform Gigicos that he'd never manage a Trump rally again, according to three people familiar with the matter." <https://bloom.bg/2vo1Fb9>

REVOLVING DOOR -- "Another RNC data guru heads for the exits," by Alex Isenstadt: "The [RNC] is losing its fifth staffer in just over a month. Conor Maguire, who has been working at the committee since 2011, is expected to depart in the next few weeks, according to two senior Republicans familiar with the move. Maguire, who served as director of external support, joins a wave of aides who have exited the committee's data department amid a change in leadership among its top ranks." <http://politi.co/2vnVBiO>

IN FOGGY BOTTOM -- "Tillerson moves to ditch special envoys," by CNN's Elise Labott, Nicole Gaouette and Jeremy Herb: "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is moving to eliminate or downgrade special envoy positions at the State Department, including the representative for climate change, a step that is sure to ignite vociferous opposition from some members of Congress. In a letter obtained by CNN and written to Senator Bob Corker, the Tennessee Republican who heads the foreign relations committee, Tillerson said he would end or transfer as many as three dozen special envoy positions. ... Special envoys for Syria, Sudan and South Sudan, and the Arctic will be eliminated." <http://cnn.it/2wdQ39g>

BANNON VS. TRUMP -- "Bannon wages war against Trump-backed candidate in Alabama," by Alex Isenstadt: "Just-departed White House chief strategist Steve Bannon is breaking from President Donald Trump in the closely watched Alabama Senate special election. During a closed-door meeting with powerful conservatives in Washington last week, Bannon declared that he's supporting former state Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore over Trump-endorsed incumbent Sen. Luther Strange, according to two people who were present. ... Appearing before a meeting of the secretive Conservative Action Project, Bannon made it clear that he supported Moore, a favorite among evangelicals, but was careful not to cast it as a break with the president. Rather, he said, it was an act of opposition toward Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who is supporting Strange and has made the race a top political priority." <http://politi.co/2wee68i>

-- **THIS WILL NOT** be a fight that McConnell will shy away from. He and his allies have gone up against Bannon in primaries before -- and won.

IT'S BEGINNING ... -- "The 2020 campaign just kicked off in a New Hampshire strip mall," by Isaac Dove in Manchester, New Hampshire: "Just like that, the 2020 retail campaigning for president began right here in a strip-mall campaign headquarters Monday, when Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti showed up for what he called 'the most important race in the country.' He was talking about the Manchester mayor's election. Joyce Craig, the Democratic candidate, invited him to join her for an afternoon that also included a speech to the Manchester Young Democrats and a fundraiser. Garcetti worked the crowds, introduced himself as 'Eric,' and took a bumper sticker and put it on the back of the black SUV he was driving around in. ... On Tuesday, Rep. John Delaney

(D-Md.), the only one to have already officially announced, will be here for a two-day trip, trying to get attention for his long-shot bid.

"On Labor Day, both Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Jason Kander, the Democrat who narrowly lost his U.S. Senate bid in Missouri last year, will be back. And on Thursday, Sanders -- who was in Indiana and Michigan last week -- will be in Iowa, along with Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon will be there in October. Former Vice President Joe Biden, who made his own teasing stop here in Manchester at the end of April, is headed to South Carolina in September." <http://politi.co/2vFtqas>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Senate chairman eyes Sessions testimony this fall,"

By Seung Min Kim and Elana Schor: "Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley is preparing for testimony by Attorney General Jeff Sessions as soon as next month - a high-stakes appearance for Sessions, who's likely to face tough questions over the ongoing investigation into President Donald Trump's ties to Russia. Grassley (R-Iowa) wrote to Sessions on Monday that 'unfortunately we still do not have a confirmed date' for the committee's usual Department of Justice oversight hearing. Staff-level discussions have zeroed in on Sept. 19, Sept. 27, or Oct. 3 as open dates for Sessions' testimony, Grassley wrote, asking Sessions to reply no later than Wednesday." <http://politi.co/2wY4orF>

THE JUICE ...

-- TWO FUN SPOTTEDS: IVANKA TRUMP last night at a table with five other women at Barcelona Wine Bar on 14th Street ("half price wine night") ... Huma Abedin lunching at Sunset Beach in Shelter Island on Monday with her son Jordan and other friends.

-- HOT JOB: The Des Moines Register is hiring for a new politics editor who will oversee their coverage of the 2020 caucus cycle (as well as the 2018 gubernatorial race and the 2020 general election). <http://bit.ly/2wF0i7H>

-- HILLARY FALL BOOK TOUR CITIES: 3 STOPS IN CANADA! D.C.; Toronto; Broward, Florida; Davis, California; Montreal, Canada; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Chicago; NYC; Milwaukee; Atlanta; Boston; Philadelphia; Seattle; Portland; and Vancouver. <http://bit.ly/2iELyH>

-- MICHAEL SCHERER is joining the Washington Post as national political reporter. He has been Time's Washington bureau chief since 2013. <http://wapo.st/2vF6N6b>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Rescue boats fill a flooded street as flood victims are evacuated as floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey rise on Aug. 28 in Houston. | David J. Phillip/AP Photo

THE NEVER-ENDING RUSSIA STORY ...

-- **WAPO'S ROS HELDERMAN, CAROL LEONNIG and TOM HAMBURGER:** "A top executive from Donald Trump's real estate company emailed Russian President Vladimir Putin's personal spokesman during the U.S. presidential campaign last year to ask for help advancing a stalled Trump Tower development project in Moscow, according to documents submitted to Congress on Monday. The request came in a mid-January 2016 email from Michael Cohen, one of Trump's closest business advisers, who asked longtime Putin lieutenant Dmitry Peskov for assistance in reviving a deal that Cohen suggested was languishing.

"Over the past few months I have been working with a company based in Russia regarding the development of a Trump Tower-Moscow project in Moscow City,' Cohen wrote to Peskov, according to a person familiar with the email. 'Without getting into lengthy specifics, the communication between our two sides has stalled. As this project is too important, I am hereby requesting your assistance. I respectfully request someone, preferably you, contact me so that I might discuss the specifics as well as arranging meetings with the appropriate individuals. I thank you in advance for your assistance and look forward to hearing from you soon,' Cohen wrote. Cohen's email marks the most direct outreach documented by a top Trump aide to a similarly senior member of Putin's government." <http://wapo.st/2wOFETi>

-- **NYT'S MATT APUZZO and MAGGIE HABERMAN: "Trump Associate Boasted That Moscow Business Deal 'Will Get Donald Elected'" :** "The associate, Felix Sater ... predicted that building a Trump Tower in Moscow would highlight Mr. Trump's savvy negotiating skills and be a political boon to his candidacy. 'Our boy can become president of the USA and we can engineer it,' Mr. Sater wrote in an email. 'I will get all of Putins team to buy in on this, I will manage this process.' ...

"Mr. Sater said he was eager to show video clips to his Russian contacts of instances of Mr. Trump speaking glowingly about Russia, and said he would arrange for Mr. Putin to praise Mr. Trump's business acumen. ... Mr. Sater said it would be 'pretty cool to get a USA President elected' and said he desired to be the ambassador to the Bahamas. 'That my friend is the home run I want out of this,' he wrote." <http://nyti.ms/2iEZg68>

FOR THE PRESIDENT -- "Mueller Team Asking If Trump Tried to Hide Purpose of Trump Tower Meeting," by NBC News' Julia Ainsley and Tom Winter: "Federal investigators working for Special Counsel Robert Mueller are keenly focused on President Donald Trump's role in crafting a response to a published article about a meeting between Russians and his son Donald Jr., three sources familiar with the matter told NBC News. The sources told NBC News that prosecutors want to know what Trump knew about the meeting and whether he sought to conceal its purpose." <http://nbcnews.to/2vnrk3Z>

ISAAC DOVERE'S "OFF MESSAGE": "How Detroit's Mayor Became Unbeatable,"

in Detroit: "Something weird is happening in Motor City: Government is working. And the guy in charge is about to get re-elected in a landslide because of it. Detroit used to look like how America ends. Abandoned skyscrapers downtown. An 18-story abandoned train station looming at the edge of the skyline like a Roman ruin. Collapsing car factories, block after block of grass growing high over lots where the houses had burned or been abandoned. Bankrupt, with the governor putting a city manager in charge, looking at selling off its art museum's collection to pay the bills-all while the glass towers of General Motors' of-course named Renaissance Center stuck up high above neighborhoods where it wasn't safe to drink the water.

"I was appalled at so many things," Mayor Mike Duggan told me in an interview for POLITICO's Off Message podcast, recorded in his office. 'That the buses just weren't running and people stood out on the corners in the winter for hours at a time. That every vacant building in the city was covered with graffiti and nobody cared. The lack of anybody caring was heartbreaking.'" ***BONUS: The previously unreported showdown he, Mitch Landrieu and Bill de Blasio had with John Podesta at Clinton campaign headquarters last year over what they warned was an economic message too long and complicated to work.*** <http://politi.co/2wemsg1> ... ***Listen to the full podcast*** <http://apple.co/2e2dLvm>

JOHN BOLTON in NR, "How to Get Out of the Iran Nuclear Deal": "Although candidate Donald Trump repeatedly criticized Barack Obama's Iran nuclear agreement, his administration has twice decided to remain in the deal. ... Many outside the administration wondered how this was possible: Was Trump in control, or were his advisers? Defining a compelling rationale to exit Obama's failed nuclear deal and elaborating a game plan to do so are quite easy. In fact, Steve Bannon asked me in late July to draw up just such a game plan for the president - the option he didn't have - which I did. ... I offer the Iran nonpaper now as a public service, since staff changes at the White House have made presenting it to President Trump impossible. Although he was once kind enough to tell me 'come in and see me any time,' those days are now over." <http://bit.ly/2wOLKmH>

-- Foreign Policy's Dan DeLuce : "A source involved in the Iran policy discussions at the White House confirmed that Bolton was in and out of the Oval Office for at least several weeks. At one point, he was even offered the possibility of serving as deputy national security advisor, with the idea that he might eventually get to replace H.R. McMaster. The source said Bolton declined, preferring to wait until he was offered the top job." <http://atfp.co/2wew5eZ>

******* A message from the American Bankers Association:** America's banks play a critical role in generating economic growth while delivering safety and convenience for customers. The two million women and men who work for America's banks safeguard \$12.9 trillion in deposits and originate \$2.4 trillion in home loans. They provide \$331 billion in loans to small businesses and \$175 billion in loans to farmers and ranchers. Banks' fraud protection measures stop at least \$11 billion in attempted fraud each year. And thousands of banker volunteers deliver financial literacy lessons annually to millions

of young Americans to help them become financially successful adults. Find out more at www.aba.com/AmericasBanks, #AmericasBanks *****

SPENCER ACKERMAN in **THE DAILY BEAST** -- "**Paul Manafort Teamed Up With Obama's Lawyer to Help Putin Ally**: As the examination of pro-Kremlin influence-peddling continues, Democrats are coming under scrutiny, too": "It wasn't just Republicans. When Paul Manafort needed a powerful D.C. law firm to bless an alarming act by his clients in Kiev's pro-Kremlin regime in Kiev, Donald Trump's future campaign chairman turned to attorneys with significant ties to Barack Obama's administration.

"In exchange, a team led by Obama's former White House counsel Greg Craig at the firm of Skadden Arps produced a report that whitewashed the pro-Putin government of Viktor Yanukovich for jailing Yanukovich's anti-Kremlin predecessor. Manafort consulted for Yanukovich's Party of Regions. And they did it all for roughly \$13,000-a conspicuously small amount for top lawyers at a prestigious law firm. (Prosecutors in Ukraine have reportedly alleged a million dollars more in secret payments.)" <http://thebea.st/2vzJQSx>

MIKE STEEL in the **CHARLOTTE OBSERVER** -- "**Dean Smith statue in the U.S. Capitol? He beats who's there now**": "The furor over removing Confederate memorials offers North Carolina an opportunity to tell a new, more positive story about our state and our values. One modest proposition: We should replace North Carolina's statue of a Confederate veteran in the U.S. Capitol with a new statue of the late, legendary college basketball coach Dean Smith." <http://bit.ly/2vo0YP5>

BUSINESS BURST -- "**At Whole Foods, Amazon Takes Rare Lead in Cutting Prices**," by WSJ's Laura Stevens and Heather Haddon: "Amazon.com on Monday put itself in the unusual position of being a first-mover on price cuts when it slashed the sticker price on more than 100 items at Whole Foods Market many by more than 30%. Amazon typically relies on algorithms that scrape competitors' prices before automatically matching or narrowly undercutting them on its website. It focuses on items that are most popular on the site and that drive traffic, according to former executives in Amazon's retail divisions. That gives the retail giant a reputation for having the lowest prices, part of its strategy of driving more shopper traffic." <http://on.wsj.com/2vFM69X>

VALLEY TALK -- **MARK ZUCKERBERG** posts on Facebook: "Priscilla and I are so happy to welcome our daughter August! We wrote her a letter about the world we hope she grows up in, and also hoping she doesn't grow up too fast." ***With the letter and a pic of the whole family*** <http://bit.ly/2vzP7cL>

MEDIAWATCH -- **Paul Farhi (@farhip)**: "Pres/CEO of @Newseum, Jeff Herbst, suddenly steps down. Interim head will Jan Neuharth, chair/CEO of Freedom Forum, Newseum says."

Playbookers

REMEMBERING MICHAEL CROMARTIE - Christianity Today's Kate Shellnut:

"Cromartie, a Washington networker who helped rebrand America's image of Christian political engagement, has died of cancer at age 67. The news of his death was reported Monday on Twitter and confirmed by colleagues at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the DC-based conservative think tank where he served for more than 30 years. Cromartie brought Christian thought leaders and secular journalists under the same roof at the Faith Angle Forum, held every year since 1999. ... In a political arena often dominated by competition, power grabs, and culture war debates, Cromartie stuck out by offering a friendlier, humbler approach." ***With remembrances by Michael Gerson, Russell Moore, Michael Wear, John Stonestreet, Pete Wehner*** <http://bit.ly/2glyRti> ... ***2013 profile*** <http://bit.ly/2weDEIW> ... ***Friends' memories of Michael on his Facebook page*** <http://bit.ly/2x00u19>

TRANSITIONS -- Julian Castro, former HUD secretary and San Antonio mayor, is joining the faculty of the LBJ School at UT Austin as the dean's distinguished fellow and fellow of the Davila chair in international trade policy. ... **Maggie Hollander** has joined MSNBC as a media relations manager. Hollander was previously an international communications manager at Viacom. ... **George Selim** has been named SVP of programs at the ADL. He's the former DHS director of the office for community partnerships.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- MICHAEL GOTTLIEB, partner at Boies Schiller Flexner and former W.H. associate counsel, has been named to National Law Journal's D.C. Rising Stars list - what he says is his biggest win: "I am proud to have helped James Alefantis, owner of Comet Ping Pong, fight back against fake news attacks falsely claiming that Comet was running a child sex ring. We helped Comet restore its business, and obtained an apology and retraction from leading conspiracy theorist Infowars." ***For NLJ subscribers*** <http://bit.ly/2xtBq0r>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Ryan Brevard, adviser at the Institute of International Education, and girlfriend **Bri Fett** recently welcomed Magnolia Marie Brevard. ***Pic*** <http://politi.co/2xGfK0v>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS - Hayley Andrews, director of government affairs and policy at the Charles Group and travel blogger at Navigate Abroad (<http://bit.ly/2tjP2ff>), on Saturday married **Eugene Gelfgat**, a lieutenant in the Army. Their small wedding was at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in Vienna, Va. The couple met as GW students on a Birthright Israel trip in 2010. ***Pic*** <http://bit.ly/2vnE9v9>

-- **Scott Rausch**, legislative director for Rep. Alex Mooney (R-W.Va.), on Saturday married **Patricia Simpson**, director of career programs at the Leadership Institute. "The couple met at a birthday party at the home of Brent Gardner, chief government affairs officer at AFP, the day Scott moved to D.C. to begin his job as a lobbyist at the NRA." ***Pic*** <http://bit.ly/2xFhdUv>

BIRTHWEEK (was Sunday): Ashley Koerber of Fox News

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Robert Rubin, former U.S. treasury secretary and co-chair emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, celebrating at Daniel in New York. **A fun fact about Bob:** "A fun fact is how I found out who Jimmy Buffett is. When I was at Treasury, I told the Republican House majority leader that Warren Buffett was opposed to cutting capital gains taxes-as was I. (And I still am.) He responded that Warren Buffett might be opposed, but *Jimmy* Buffett is in favor. I started to say, 'Why should I care about Warren Buffett's son?' but I didn't. Later, someone told me that Jimmy Buffett is a famous singer, so I called Alan Greenspan to see if he had heard of this Jimmy Buffett character. He said it was probably Warren's son. I later told President Clinton about my exchange with the majority leader. The President laughed at me for not knowing who Jimmy Buffett is, and I told him that Greenspan also thought he was Warren's son. President Clinton said that for some reason this didn't surprise him." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2vFATX0>

BIRTHDAYS: Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch ... Gary Shapiro, president and CEO of Consumer Technology Association ... former Treasury Secretary Jack Lew ... Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) ... Connie Milstein (hat tip: Tammy Haddad) ... Politico's Nancy Scola and Rachael Cusick ... Charlie Spies, leader of Clark Hill's national Political Law practice ... Amy Nathan ... lobbyist Tom Jolly ... NYT's Sewell Chan ... Rich Cooper ... Sacha Zimmerman, senior editor at The Atlantic ... Andrew Adair ... Guam Gov. Eddie Baza Calvo ... Rep. Dave Reichert (R-Wash.) ... Stacey Hughes, president and founding partner of The Nickles Group ... Sal Albanese, former 15-year NYC city councilman now running for mayor ... former NY Assemblyman Richard Brodsky ...

... **Ed Wyatt**, SVP of Sphere Consulting ... Jerr Rosenbaum, partner at HLP&R Advocacy ... Duncan Neasham, comms director at tech trade group ITI (h/t Jose Castaneda) ... Roger McShane, Cairo bureau chief for The Economist ... Anna Adams-Sarthou ... Tim Warner ... Kendra Marr Chaikind ... Sam Hudis ... Molly Phillips Fogarty, SVP of corporate affairs at Nestle ... Paul Coussan ... Catherine Hill, director for Brunswick Group in SF and San Francisco Rec League Soccer Star (h/ts Nick Massella and Suzanne Merkelson) ... Meagan Bond ... Beth Mlynarczyk ... Suzanne Henkels ... Christina Silva, news director at Newsweek ... Ryann DuRant ... former Sen. David Pryor (D-Ark.) ... Ben Martello ... Allan Lengel ... Adam Shapiro ... Sarah Smith-Clevenger of Louisiana ... Amy Storey ... Susan Markham ... David Morehouse ... Barb Worcester ... Kevin Sweeny ... Paige Ennis ... Alison Schwartz (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

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of young Americans to help them become financially successful adults. Find out more at www.aba.com/AmericasBanks, #AmericasBanks *****

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07/18/2017 06:49 AM EDT

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Driving the Day

Good Tuesday morning. OBAMACARE REPEAL "WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL" -- PLAN B -- BURGESS EVERETT and JEN HABERKORN: "The Kentucky Republican said he planned to hold a vote in the coming days to take up the House-passed bill to replace the 2010 health law and then call up an amendment to eliminate major parts of Obamacare, such as the Medicaid expansion, insurance subsidies and fines for the employer and individual mandates. Republicans passed a similar bill to effectively repeal Obamacare in 2015 under reconciliation -- the fast-track budget procedure the GOP is using to thwart a Democratic filibuster -- but it was vetoed by President Barack Obama.

"McConnell added that the repeal-only bill is 'what a majority of the Senate has already supported in 2015,' but GOP lawmakers have voiced severe doubts that such a plan can win the 50 votes necessary this year given the uncertainty it would throw onto insurance markets. The 2015 vote was viewed as mostly symbolic at the time given Obama's certain veto.

"But after his own caucus tanked McConnell's attempts to repeal and replace Obamacare simultaneously and at the prodding of the president, the GOP leader is going to force his caucus to go on the record on health care. If the Senate does vote to open debate on the House bill, which is not guaranteed, the repeal-only bill would be the first amendment. But senators would still be able to offer unlimited amendments to the bill, leading the GOP down an uncertain road once the process began.

"McConnell's announcement followed the news that GOP Sens. Mike Lee of Utah and Jerry Moran of Kansas said they could not support the current bill. They joined

Maine Sen. Susan Collins and Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul in opposition, denying GOP leaders the support to even bring the bill to the floor and upending Republicans' seven-year goal of repealing Obamacare. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who is recovering from surgery, also issued a statement advising the party to start over with a bipartisan approach." <http://politi.co/2vvZ6zC>

JOSH DAWSEY -- "Trump blindsided by implosion of GOP health care bill":

"President Trump convened a strategy session over steak and succotash at the White House with senators Monday night, trying to plot an uphill path to repealing Obamacare and replacing it with a GOP alternative. He made an impassioned pitch on why Republicans needed to do it now - and the political peril they could face if they didn't 'repeal and replace' after promising to do it for years. He also vented about Democrats and the legislative process. 'He basically said, if we don't do this, we're in trouble,' said one person briefed on the meeting. 'That we have the Senate, House and White House and we have to do it or we're going to look terrible.'

"Meanwhile, two senators - neither invited to the dinner - were simultaneously drafting statements saying how they couldn't support the current bill, which they released just after Trump's White House meal concluded. Trump had no idea the statements were coming, according to several White House and congressional officials. His top aides were taken aback, and the White House was soon on the phone with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell." <http://politi.co/2utlugc>

-- PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP at 10:17 p.m.: "Republicans should just REPEAL failing ObamaCare now & work on a new Healthcare Plan that will start from a clean slate. Dems will join in!"

-- @costareports: "Privately, several House mbrs and Sns told me for weeks they didn't really want to pass it. Like groom w/ cold feet, after long engagement."

HOW IT'S PLAYING -- Drudge: "REPEAL DEAD -- OBAMACARE REMAINS LAW OF LAND" ... **HuffPost:** "McConnell Hellbent: Repeal With No Replace!" ... **Breitbart:** "RIP: Republican HealthCare Bill Flatlines".

NYT'S JENNIFER STEINHAUER, News Analysis on A10: "Old Truth Trips Up G.O.P. on Health Law: A Benefit Is Hard to Retract": "In the end, Republicans relearned a lesson that has bedeviled them since the New Deal: An American entitlement, once established, can almost never be retracted.

"Since the day the Affordable Care Act passed Congress, Republicans have vowed to overturn it. In the beginning, many voters were with them, handing the Republican Party some of the tools: a sweeping rejection of House Democrats in 2010 -- a rejection of government reach -- followed by the Senate in 2014. But in the intervening years, as millions of Americans have become insured under the law that was derisively tagged with President Barack Obama's name, the health care program has become more and more popular, even with Republican governors." <http://nyti.ms/2u3ZZQk>

A QUICK STATUS UPDATE ON THE PRESIDENT'S AGENDA -- Health care repeal and replace: Stalled, dead for now, with a very uncertain future ... **Infrastructure:** No true signs of life. The low-hanging fruit -- privatizing the FAA -- is even facing an uphill climb ... **Tax reform:** Very uncertain. The House and Senate have to pass a fiscal year 2018 budget, which will be very difficult. Conservatives are already buzzing about killing it -- and thereby, ending the prospects for tax reform. If they are able to pass the budget, there is widespread disagreement about what tax reform should look like. ... **Government spending:** The appropriations process has started, but not a single bill has passed either chamber. Government spending runs dry at the end of September. ... **The debt ceiling:** There is no plan to lift the nation's borrowing limit and there's intense disagreement within the Trump administration -- and in Congress -- about how to proceed.

HAPPENING TODAY -- THE NEW HOUSE GOP BUDGET IS OUT --

<http://bit.ly/2tIrTu0>

--"House GOP unveils budget plan that attaches major spending cuts to coming tax reform bill," by WaPo's Mike DeBonis: "House Republicans unveiled a 2018 budget plan Tuesday that would pave the way for ambitious tax reform legislation - but only alongside a package of politically sensitive spending cuts that threaten to derail the tax rewrite before it begins. GOP infighting over spending, health care and other matters continues to cast doubt on whether the budget blueprint can survive a House vote. ... The House Budget Committee blueprint, which is set for a Thursday committee vote, sets out special procedures that could ultimately allow Republicans to pass legislation over the objections of Senate Democrats who can normally block bills they oppose." <http://wapo.st/2vd7GDT>

THIS HEALTH CARE HICCUP will almost certainly overshadow the administration's "Made in America" push this week.

THE NEW REALITIES -- President Donald Trump's administration publicly predicted that health care would be repealed and replaced quickly after the election. Congressional leaders thought it would be done by the spring. It's now clear health care is quickly eating up nearly all of 2017.

-- The House is scheduled to be in session just **seven more days** and the Senate has **18 days** until the August recess. (This accounts for the Senate saying it will stay in through the first two weeks of August, which could change if they get an agreement on clearing judicial nominations.)

-- **THERE ARE A LOT OF REASONS** that the new McConnell plan is tricky and there is a reason they didn't do this to begin with: it isn't certain to work.

First, Republicans will have to vote on a motion to proceed to begin debate on the House-passed Obamacare repeal and replace bill. Senate Republicans are in near

uniform opposition to this legislation, so taking it up is a tough vote. Then they have to vote on repealing Obamacare through amendment without any firm plan to replace it -- an extremely perilous vote many lawmakers in both chambers are tired of taking. The president is then relying on Democrats to join Republicans in a process to replace the health care law -- something they've said quite clearly they have no interest in doing.

JEN HABERKORN (@jenhab): "Sen. Susan Collins was only (still in office) GOP senator to oppose 2015 Obamacare repeal bill. All Dems opposed."

-- IF THIS PASSES IN THE SENATE, the bill's future is uncertain in the House. Just 22 Republicans have to decide they don't want to repeal Obamacare without a replacement plan.

WHERE WAS THE PRESIDENT THE LAST FEW DAYS? At his golf course in New Jersey, watching the U.S. Women's Open. Yes, he made phone calls. Yes, he had a strategy dinner last night. Yes, his legislative affairs team was working over members. But winning in Washington takes a full-court press, not a passive push. Tara Palmeri scooped that Trump said at a dinner last night with senators Republicans would look like "dopes" if they couldn't repeal and replace Obamacare. **UHH ...** The president is the top Republican and the leader of the party.

-- THE WHITE HOUSE is fond of saying that they just want something to sign, and they don't care much what that is. That strategy has not really worked.

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** {Video} Under the proposed Border Adjustment Tax, small business owners say the costs of their products will increase substantially. What are they supposed to tell their customers? [Watch Dave's story.](#) *****

FACT CHECK -- "Trump Says He Has Signed More Bills Than Any President, Ever. He Hasn't," by NYT's Mike Shear and Karen Yourish: "To hear President Trump tell it, his first six months in the White House should be judged in part by the legislation he has signed into law. At rallies, in speeches and on Twitter, Mr. Trump repeatedly boasts of the bills he has signed - 42 as of this week. He has said no president has 'passed more legislation,' conceding once earlier this year that he trails Franklin D. Roosevelt, who he notes 'had a major Depression to handle.'

"In fact, as he approaches six months in office on Thursday, Mr. Trump is slightly behind the lawmaking pace for the past six presidents, who as a group signed an average of 43 bills during the same period. And an analysis of the bills Mr. Trump signed shows that about half were minor and inconsequential, passed by Congress with little debate. Among recent presidents, both the total number of bills he signed and the legislation's substance make Mr. Trump about average." <http://nyti.ms/2tb3J0U>

WSJ EDITORIAL BOARD - "The Trumps and the Truth: The best defense against future revelations is radical transparency": "If Mr. Trump's approval rating stays under

40% into next year, Republicans will begin to separate themselves from an unpopular President in a (probably forlorn) attempt to save their majorities in Congress. If Democrats win the House, the investigations into every aspect of the Trump business empire, the 2016 campaign and the Administration will multiply. Impeachment will be a constant undercurrent if not an active threat. His supporters will become demoralized." <http://on.wsj.com/2tAHwsT>

THE NEXT CRISIS -- "Steven Mnuchin, Trump's treasury secretary, is hurtling toward his first fiasco," by WaPo's Damian Paletta: "Shortly before he was sworn in as treasury secretary, Steven Mnuchin spoke with his predecessor to get some advice. ... Lew told Mnuchin to take the debt ceiling seriously - or face a potential financial crisis. Months later, Mnuchin is hurtling toward his first fiasco, unable to get Congress, let alone his colleagues in the Trump administration, on board with a strategy to raise the federal limit on governmental borrowing. His struggles are casting doubt on whether the political neophyte, who made his name on Wall Street, has the stature in Washington to press through a vote on a measure that former treasury secretaries of both parties have said is critical to preserving the nation's reputation for financial stability." <http://wapo.st/2vcHd9t>

-- DESPITE THE MIXED MESSAGES FROM THE WHITE HOUSE, several GOP staffers have said the most likely scenario right now is that Senate Republicans to pass a clean debt ceiling and that the House will likely take up the legislation and pass it with a few dozen Republicans, and a large majority of House Democrats.

FOGGY BOTTOM WATCH -- "Tillerson's Grand Renovation Plan in State Department Gets Assistance," by NYT's Gardiner Harris: "Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson is moving ahead with plans to restructure his department, and has hired two consulting groups to assist with the process, according to a cable sent to embassies around the world. In the cable, Mr. Tillerson said he had hired Deloitte and Insigniam to help oversee the reorganization. Insigniam had previously overseen an internal polling effort to get suggestions from the department's rank and file about how to make the department more efficient." <http://nyti.ms/2vwU2Li>

-- "Tillerson to Shutter State Department War Crimes Office," by Foreign Policy's Colum Lynch: "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is downgrading the U.S. campaign against mass atrocities, shuttering the Foggy Bottom office that worked for two decades to hold war criminals accountable, according to several former U.S. officials. Tillerson's office recently informed Todd Buchwald, the special coordinator of the Office of Global Criminal Justice, that he is being reassigned to a position in the State Department's office of legal affairs ... Buchwald, a career State Department lawyer, has served in the position since December 2015." <http://atfp.co/2tAG2if>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "McConnell plans vote for FBI nominee Wray before August recess," by Seung Min Kim: "Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell plans to install Christopher Wray to lead the FBI before senators leave Washington for the August recess, a spokesman for the Kentucky Republican said Monday. Wray, who has

been nominated to replace the fired James Comey, breezed through his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee last week, and has since picked up support from several key Democratic senators. Republicans don't need Democrats to confirm Wray, but they do need their cooperation to hold a speedy vote, and Democrats have recently been dragging out consideration of even noncontroversial nominees."

<http://politi.co/2vbVVh8>

NYT'S ANDREW E. KRAMER in MOSCOW: "The salacious video, of a naked man in bed with two women, was one of the most prominent examples of 'kompromat,' the Russian art of spreading damaging information to discredit a rival or an enemy, in recent Russian history. It was made available to Russian state television in the late 1990s and authenticated in public by Yuri Y. Chaika, Russia's prosecutor general, who at 66 has a long and storied background in kompromat. Mr. Chaika benefited from the video, as it destroyed a predecessor as prosecutor general, Yuri I. Skuratov, who had been looking into suspicions of corruption by President Boris N. Yeltsin and his associates.

"Mr. Chaika (pronounced CHIKE-uh) is also the man who is widely considered to have been the source of the incriminating information on Hillary Clinton that Donald Trump Jr. was promised at a meeting last June in Trump Tower with a Russian lawyer and a Russian-American lobbyist. And yet, oddly, the accusations brought to New York fell flat, by the accounts of those present, despite their having originated from such a seasoned master of kompromat." <http://nyti.ms/2u4Qsdh>

BREAKING -- WAPO's ELLEN NAKASHIMA (posted at 6 a.m.): "The former managers of Hillary Clinton and Mitt Romney's presidential campaigns are leading a new initiative called 'Defending Digital Democracy' in the hopes of preventing a repeat of Russia's 2016 election interference. Robby Mook, Clinton's 2016 campaign chief, and Matt Rhoades, who managed the 2012 run of GOP nominee Romney, are heading up the project at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs in one of the first major efforts outside government to grapple with 21st century hacking and propaganda operations -- and ways to deter them." <http://wapo.st/2vxe9ZV>

THE JUICE ...

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- NRCC CHAIRMAN STEVE STIVERS announced at a retreat over the weekend that he is instituting a new push to extract more cash from Republicans on K Street. He has asked Rep. Ann Wagner (R-Mo.), who recently passed on a Senate bid, to lead the effort. Some sources who heard the announcement -- made at the NRCC's retreat in Nemacolin, Pennsylvania -- said it sounded like Stivers was reinstating the K Street Project, a controversial program that gave GOP lobbyists access to lawmakers, and pressured them to hire Hill Republicans. Alas, that's not what sources close to Stivers say he meant.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK - NEW UCHICAGO IOP FALL FELLOWS: "Laura Haim, a French/American journalist who was spokesperson for Emmanuel Macron's presidential campaign and served as U.S. Bureau Chief for Canal Plus/iTele ... **Fred P. Hochberg,**

former chairman and president of the U.S. Export-Import Bank ... **Jason Kander**, former Missouri Secretary of State, former Missouri State Representative, and founder of Let America Vote ... **Jeff Roe**, a Republican political consultant who served as national senior advisor and campaign manager for Ted Cruz's 2016 presidential campaign ... **Kathleen Sebelius**, the 21st U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services and former Governor of Kansas ... **Bakari Sellers**, former South Carolina State Representative ... **Karen Tumulty**, national political correspondent for The Washington Post." <http://politi.co/2vd7PHg>

COMING ATTRACTIONS - per Kurt Bardella: "The 19th annual Hoops for Youth Congressional Basketball Game is set for Tuesday, September 26th at the GW Smith Center. It features members of Congress vs. Lobbyists and Lobbyists vs Staff. [House Majority Whip Steve] Scalise has played in this game for almost 10 years now. Obviously, Rep. Scalise will not be able to play this year, so in his honor, we will award for the first time the Steve Scalise MVP award for each game."

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump tries on a Stetson hat during a "Made in America" product showcase at the White House on July 17, which featured items created in each of the 50 states. | Alex Brandon/AP Photo

FOR THE PRESIDENT -- "Finally, a Poll Trump Will Like: Clinton Even More Unpopular," by Bloomberg's John McCormick: "Trump's 2016 Democratic rival is viewed favorably by just 39 percent of Americans in the latest Bloomberg National Poll, two points lower than the president. It's the second-lowest score for Clinton since the poll started tracking her in September 2009. The former secretary of state has always been a polarizing figure, but this survey shows she's even lost popularity among those who voted for her in November." <https://bloom.bg/2uycx4R>

L.A. TIMES UPDATE: "The former dean of USC's medical school is on leave and is no longer seeing patients after the Los Angeles Times reported that he associated with criminals and drug users who said he abused methamphetamine and other drugs, university officials said Monday. Carmen A. Puliafito led the Keck School of Medicine for nearly a decade before resigning in 2016. He remained on the Keck faculty and continued to represent the university at public events. Puliafito, a noted ophthalmologist, also continued to accept patients at campus eye clinics as recently as this weekend, according to his USC Web page.

"The Times published its investigation Monday. USC said in a statement later in the day that it was 'following all proper procedures to review his status in patient care. He is currently on leave from his roles at USC, including seeing patients.' 'If the assertions

reported in the July 17 Los Angeles Times story are true, we hope that Carmen receives care and treatment that will lead him to a full recovery,' the statement said. Officials declined to comment further. As of Monday, Puliafito's USC Web page had been changed to say he is 'not accepting or seeing patients.'" <http://lat.ms/2tB0UG9> ... **The original story** <http://lat.ms/2uv907f>

2020 WATCH -- JONATHAN MARTIN in the NYT: "**As Party Drifts Left, Pragmatic Democratic Governors Have Eye on White House**": "'I believe the time is right to lend my voice, the voice of someone that after getting elected has been able to govern in what's viewed as a red state,' Gov. Steve Bullock of Montana said in an interview. 'Some of the things that I've been able to do in Montana can also translate beyond just the state's border.'

"Mr. Bullock is creating a federal political action committee, Big Sky Values PAC, that will offer a political infrastructure to let him meet Democratic donors, contribute to the party's candidates and fund his out-of-state electoral travels. And if the contrast with the likes of Mr. Sanders, 75, were not obvious enough, the governor held up one of his accomplishments against one of Mr. Sanders's calling cards. 'We can talk free college for all all we want, but there's a whole lot of people that can get a darn good job, like in Montana, out of an apprenticeship,' Mr. Bullock said, citing programs he has supported as governor. 'Sixty-thousand-dollar average salary, and they're making money while they're getting there.'" <http://nyti.ms/2uDxv37>

ISAAC DOVERE interviews **NORTH CAROLINA GOV. ROY COOPER** in the latest "Off Message" podcast: "Roy Cooper is launching a new effort to try to chase Republicans out of their supermajority in the state legislature, and he sat down at the governor's mansion to discuss the effort. 'Until I get some leverage in the General Assembly, I can't get the things done in education, in economic development. I can't do as much to stop this social conservative legislation that makes us embarrassed as a state, and doesn't truly reflect who we are as North Carolinians,' the governor said. 'And it's time for that to stop.'

"He's already raised \$1 million for what they're calling Break the Majority, and plans to raise millions more in the years to come for what will effectively be a new Raleigh-based campaign committee run out of the state Democratic party, with a full-time staff and money for ads and campaign. Cooper and national Democrats are hoping other governors see it as a model, while other candidates-including Ralph Northam in Virginia and Gwen Graham in Florida-have already called for advice on their own races." <http://politi.co/2uDFX21> ... **Listen to the full podcast** <http://apple.co/2e2dLvm>

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** The overwhelming majority of retailers are small businesses, with more than 98% of all retail companies employing fewer than 50 people. While small in size, their voices are loud and clear when fighting to be heard on decisions and policies that impact their businesses and the customers they serve every day. [Hear more industry stories on NRF's Retail Gets Real podcast.](#)

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Trump Recertifies Iran Nuclear Deal, but Only Reluctantly,"

by NYT's Peter Baker: "President Trump agreed on Monday to certify again that Iran is complying with an international nuclear agreement that he has strongly criticized, but only after hours of arguing with his top national security advisers, briefly upending a planned announcement as a legal deadline loomed. ... At an hourlong meeting last Wednesday, all of the president's major security advisers recommended he preserve the Iran deal for now. Among those who spoke out were Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson; Defense Secretary Jim Mattis; Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, the national security adviser; and Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to an official who described internal discussions on the condition of anonymity.

"The official said Mr. Trump had spent 55 minutes of the meeting telling them he did not want to. Mr. Trump did not want to certify Iran's compliance the first time around either, but was talked into it on the condition that his team come back with a new strategy to confront Tehran, the official said. Last week, advisers told the president they needed more time to work with allies and Congress. Mr. Trump responded that before he would go along, they had to meet certain conditions, said the official, who would not outline what the conditions were." <http://nyti.ms/2uDOUZs>

-- **"White House under pressure to drop Export-Import Bank nominee,"** by Zach Warmbrodt and Andrew Restuccia: "President Donald Trump is standing behind former Rep. Scott Garrett, his choice to head the Export-Import Bank, amid escalating pressure from business groups to pull the plug on the nomination. 'Scott Garrett is imminently [sic] qualified to lead the Ex-Im Bank,' White House spokeswoman Natalie Strom said in a statement to POLITICO. 'The President stands behind his nomination and is looking forward to his confirmation.'

"Trump's defense of the New Jersey Republican comes as rumors swirl that Garrett may withdraw amid fears that his nomination will not win enough votes to clear the Senate. Lawmakers from both parties have raised concerns about him, largely because he strongly opposed the bank while serving in Congress. The Senate Banking Committee, which will be responsible for vetting his nomination, has not yet received his paperwork." <http://politi.co/2uwlInjk>

MIKE FLYNN UPDATE -- "Flynn Plans Defense Fund to Pay Trump Russia Probe Legal Bills," by Bloomberg's Shannon Pettipiece: "Former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn plans to set up a fund to raise money to pay his legal bills stemming from multiple investigations into possible Trump campaign ties to Russia, according to a person close to Flynn. Flynn may become the first associate of President Donald Trump to begin raising money for legal costs associated with the Russia investigation, though others also are weighing how to finance their legal defenses. ... Even if Flynn is never charged with a crime, his legal costs could reach hundreds of thousands of dollars." <https://bloom.bg/2taWqX4>

VALLEY TALK -- "Netflix Surprises With Big Subscriber Gains, Shares Soar," by WSJ's Austen Hufford: "Netflix Inc. blew through its subscriber-growth estimate in the second quarter, showing that its big bets on original programming and international expansion are paying off, even as the streaming market gets more crowded. The Los Gatos, Calif., company ended the quarter with nearly 104 million subscribers globally. It added 5.2 million users in total, far more than the 3.2 million it had projected, as well as Wall Street's estimate of 3.5 million net additions." <http://on.wsj.com/2uDAGHJ>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Carter Page Is Trying To Shop A Book Around," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "Carter Page -- who has been questioned by the FBI about his contacts with Russians and has denied wrongdoing -- is pitching his book to publishers as the foil to a book in the works by former FBI director James Comey. ... On Sunday, Page blasted an email to publishing representatives and members of the media saying that his own book, titled *Politics, Lies, And The Wiretap: Inside The Fight To End The 70-Year Cold War*, will 'prove infinitely more accurate, exciting and insightful' than Comey's project." <http://bzfd.it/2tIOgzl>

-- "50 Years As a Political Reporter Hasn't Worn Andrea Mitchell Down," by Women's Wear Daily's Alexandra Steigard: <http://bit.ly/2tATXVv>

--LATIMES' MIKE MEMOLI to NBC NEWS -- per Hadas Gold's Morning Media: "He'll be a national political reporter and will appear across all their platforms, including MSNBC. This is a homecoming of sorts for Memoli, who was at NBC as an embed in 2007 and 2008."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe last night at Rasika West End (h/t Julia Zuckerman) ... last night at Cafe Milano: Boris Epshteyn ... At the Capital Grille: Trump communications staffer Kaelan Dorr ... Jon Ossoff over the weekend at Colada Shop on 14th and T streets in D.C. ... Randy Bryce, a Democrat who hopes to run against Paul Ryan, hanging out last night in Bullfeathers - **pics** <http://bit.ly/2vwYh9N> ... <http://bit.ly/2tlrPKP>

OUT AND ABOUT -- Björn Lyrvall, ambassador of Sweden, last night welcomed the Institute for Education 4th Open Government to his residence where he was presented the IFE Global Tech Visionary Award. **SPOTTED:** Austrian Amb. Waldner Wolfgang, Sri Lankan Amb. Kariyawasam Prasad, Afghan Amb. Hamdullah Mohib, Finnish Amb. Kauppi Kirsti, Singapore Amb. Ashok Mirpuri, Rosemarie Pauli, Coach Kathy Kemper, Jennifer Griffin, Aneesh Chopra, Matt Lira, Jim Valentine, Sokwoo Rhee, Rebecca Propp, Megan Smith, Cori Zarek, Kristen Honey, Grace Koh, Joel Minton, Rob Cook, Emma King Doyle, Tim Cameron, Ben Friedman, Ross Dakin, Raffi Krekorian and

Seamus Kraft.

-- **JEFF ROE** held a party last night at his firm Axiom Strategies' new D.C. office.

SPOTTED: Sens. Luther Strange (R-Ala.) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), former Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.), Reps. Buddy Carter (R-Ga.), Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), Raul Labrador (R-Idaho), Kevin Yoder (R-Kan.), Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), Joe Barton (R-Texas), Sam Graves (R-Mo.), Billy Long (R-Mo.) and Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.).

-- **SPOTTED** last night on the rooftop of Thorn Run Partners' office, the going-away party for Rich White, who left to helm Jackson National's top government affairs job: Reps. Tim Walberg (R-Mich.), Mike Bishop (R-Mich.), Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), and Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.), Allan Philip, RJ Laukitis, Melanie Reinhard, Barry Stowe, Patrick Steel, Bradley Knox, Gina Rigby, Conrad Woody, Noah Marine, Chris Gaston, Lee Covington, Dirk Kempthorne, Alane Dent, Chris Lamond, Andrew Rosenberg, Stuart Chapman, Harriet Melvin, Jason Rosenstock, Catherine Finely, Chas Williams.

TRANSITIONS -- **Sarah Lovenheim** started this week as special assistant for strategic communications to California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. She'll be based in Washington. She worked for Becerra when he was chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. She also worked for former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in the Senate. ... **Jennifer Myers** has joined as the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation as its new executive director. She most recently worked on the business side of the Wall Street Journal and is a YWCA and Aspen Institute alum. ...

... **Ben Khouri** has been named deputy press secretary for Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.). Ben previously was an LC in the senator's personal office and worked for Sen. McConnell before joining the Burr team two years ago. ... **Ricki Eshman** was named press secretary for Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.). She was previously deputy press secretary and also worked in then-Gov. Hassan's press office.

OBAMA ALUMNI -- **Clare Kim** recently joined JPMorgan Chase as the head of digital strategy for the corporate and investment bank after serving as digital director for the Treasury Department in the Obama administration. ... **Sam Jammal**, a former Obama Commerce Dept. official and clean energy executive, has announced he'll run against Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.).

ENGAGED -- **Raaed Haddad**, senior LA for Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.), recently got engaged to **Katherine Moffitt**, an LA for Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), in Kennebunkport, Maine. The couple met at a Michigan delegation event at the 2012 RNC Convention in Tampa and started dating in 2013. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2taG3dd>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- **Ryan Stanton**, director of government affairs at Rio Tinto, married **Lindsay Conwell**, head of industry, nonprofits at Google, on Saturday at the San Diego Yacht Club. Lindsay met Ryan by chance in mid-2014 while looking for a new place and taking a tour of his apartment. While she ultimately didn't take the apartment, she did take him up on his offer to go on a date shortly thereafter. **Pics**

<http://bit.ly/2vcZP9u> ... <http://bit.ly/2uDIFF4> **SPOTTED:** Niki Christoff, Coco Pannell, Riva Sciuto, Todd Malan, Carla Eudy, Rob Ellsworth, Adam Elias, Sara Snyder, Dave Desantis, Samantha Dravis, Kat Ciano, Ali-Jae Henke.

-- **Kevin Reynolds**, a political analyst for the federal government, on Saturday married **Dr. Chrissy Shaw**, a dentist. The ceremony was at Dahlgren Chapel of the Sacred Heart at Georgetown with a reception at the National Press Club. The couple shared the same dorm freshman year at Georgetown, but didn't really get to know each other until winter of junior year. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2uuHdEp>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Jarrod Agen, communications director for Vice President Mike Pence, and **Bettina Inclan**, a communications and political consultant and an alum of the RNC, NRCC and the Romney campaign, welcomed Dario Apollo Agen, "a very big baby boy" on Friday at 2:37 p.m. He was just under 11 lbs at birth (10 lbs and 14 oz) and 23 inches long. Their second son's middle name, Apollo, is in honor of Bettina's grandfather Apolinar, a Cuban political prisoner for more than 13 years during Fidel Castro's dictatorship. The family left the hospital yesterday. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2tb3Ycl> ... **Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2tScAb>

-- **Josh Fisher**, manager of state government affairs of the Association of Global Automakers, and **Amanda Fisher**, director of external relations at Reading Partners Baltimore, have welcomed Waylon Wah Fisher, born Wednesday at 5:15 p.m. He weighed 7lbs and joins his brother Baron Fisher, age 4. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2u44JFC> ... <http://bit.ly/2tb3uTA>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Olivier Knox, chief Washington correspondent for Yahoo News. **How he's celebrating:** "With my wife and son, far from D.C. and away from the thumbsucking ragegasm addicts over-represented on social media." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2vdm8Me>

BIRTHDAYS: former Sen. Mark Udall (D-Colo.) is 67 ... Jigsaw's Varun Anand, an HFA alum, is 23 ... Liz Kreutz, anchor/reporter at ABC10 in Sacramento and an ABC News alum ... WaPo and NBC alum Alice Rhee ... Mila Henry, daughter of Ed ... former Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) is 96 ... Chris Marroletti, deputy director of operations for Team Ryan, is 26. He celebrated with friends last night at RPM (hat tip: Colton Malkerson) ... Reid Davenport ... Politico's Lauren Davie ... James Wallner ... Sukrit Agarwal ... David Vandivier, former Obama and Clinton Administration Treasury and WH staffer, currently at BNY Mellon ... Suzanne Ruecker ... Keri-Lynn Doyle ... Kate Balcerzak ... Bob Moore ... Dylan Roberts ... Teddy Tanzer of Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck ... Jess Monahan ... Carol Ross Joynt, booker for MSNBC's "Meet The Press Daily" ... Pepper Pennington Natonski ... Alex Spence, senior UK political correspondent at BuzzFeed ... Fox 5's Steve Chenevey ... Jonathan Taplin, director emeritus of the USC Annenberg Innovation Lab, is 7-0. He celebrated with a WSJ Review cover story on Saturday, "Can the Tech Giants Be Stopped?" <http://on.wsj.com/2vcZh3l> ... Michael Luongo ... Jill Neunaber ... Jenna Kimberley ... Julie Fischer McCarter (h/t sister Betsy) ...

... **Steve Forbes**, the pride of Morristown, NJ, is 7-0 (h/t Carl Lavin) ... Julia Krieger, deputy comms director for Sen. Heitkamp ... former Rep. Mark Souder (R-Ind.) is 67 ... former Rep. Bill Delahunt (D-Mass.) is 76 ... former Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-Ariz.) is 77 ... Donnell Young ... Kathleen Leebel ... Jen Hoelzer ... Britta Towle, account supervisor at PR firm Battalion (hubby tip: Rowan Morris) ... Lauren Czeizler ... John Yanchek, associate at ArcLight Capital Partners and a Goldman Sachs alum ... Matt Iandoli ... CNBC's Jackie DeAngelis ... Kate Cichy ... Dana Camp-Farber ... Matt Stinson ... Omar Kasule is 26 ... Bill Knapp, the one from Iowa not DC ... Jared Fitzgerald ... Mike Rice (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Erin Meiman ... Brian Schubert ... Sam Simon ... Veronica Rogers ... Robert Colorina ... Howard J. Lee is 35 ... Jeff Kosseff ... actor James Brolin is 77 ... Baseball Hall of Famer Joe Torre is 77 ... dance music singer-songwriter M.I.A. is 42 ... Vin Diesel is 41 ... Kristen Bell is 37 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from the National Retail Federation:** The overwhelming majority of retailers are small businesses, with more than 98% of all retail companies employing fewer than 50 people. While small in size, their voices are loud and clear when fighting to be heard on decisions and policies that impact their businesses and the customers they serve every day. [Hear more industry stories on NRF's Retail Gets Real podcast.](#)

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From: Konkus, John
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 9:03:55 PM
Subject: Daily WH Report
Daily Communications Report 8 1 17.docx

Team: Attached is the daily WH comms report. I changed up their format a bit so we can include more top stories – basically cutting and pasting James’ evening news highlights.

I’ll plan on sending this at 5:30pm with any edits or additions you all may have.

Thank you!

John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

To: McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Morris, Madeline[morris.madeline@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 8:47:26 PM
Subject: EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17
EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17 .docx

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO₂ is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The

letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and

former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil

companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news

outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

“Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia’s alleged attempts to influence our Country’s presidential election,” Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

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EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon

dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting

regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the

government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

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"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

'Behind the Scenes'

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Mon 8/28/2017 8:36:15 PM
Subject: Daily WH report
Daily Communications Report 8 28 17.docx

Team: Attached is today's report. Please take a look and provide any feedback. I'll plan to send this around 5:30pm. Thank you.

John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 6/14/2017 10:58:24 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by POET: BREAKING OVERNIGHT: Massive fire in west London -- WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE: TRUMP slaps down House Republicans' health care bill -- POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL: Voters trust Comey over Trump -- B'DAY: Brian Fallon

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by POET
06/14/2017 06:55 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. PRESIDENT. Donald Trump turns 71 today (h/ts Reince and Spicer).

BREAKING OVERNIGHT ... THE LATEST FROM LONDON FIRE -- "6 dead in London fire; figure expected to rise" - AP/London: " London's Metropolitan Police say six people have died in the devastating fire that engulfed a west London apartment block. Police say the number is expected to rise. Police commander Stuart Cundy says he can 'confirm six fatalities at this time but this figure is likely to rise during what will be a complex recovery operation over a number of days.' Cundy says many others are receiving medical care. Some 50 people are being treated in hospitals after a massive fire set a 24-story apartment block in west London ablaze overnight."

<http://apne.ws/2srBxu0>

--THE GUARDIAN: "The blaze rapidly engulfed the full height of the 24-storey block, and was still burning strongly more than six hours later, with a thick pall of dark smoke visible across the capital. Residents could be seen waving and screaming from their windows, as firefighters wearing breathing apparatus fought to rescue them from their flats. Shortly before 8am, the London fire commissioner, Dany Cotton [said:] 'In my 29 years of being a firefighter I have never ever seen anything of this scale.'"

<http://bit.ly/2rgHyFN>

Good Wednesday morning. IMAGINE IF you're a House Republican, and voted for the leadership's health-care bill in May after being told that you were doing the newly elected president a solid. You listened to the White House's pleading -- perhaps you got

a phone call from Vice President Mike Pence, Chief of Staff Reince Priebus or even the president himself. The administration was on the Hill nonstop to push their legislation. You explained to your constituents that the late-in-the-game changes made to the bill helped cover more people. You celebrated with him in the Rose Garden after passage.

NOW YOU HEAR THE PRESIDENT has gone behind closed doors and told senators the House bill is "mean" and says it doesn't do enough to cover people. Wouldn't that anger you? Well, it's angering a lot of House Republicans, who believe their president put them at political risk with that comment. A Senate health care bill was always going to be more moderate than the House version. If you're a House Republican, are you going to help the White House next time after the president privately just dumped all over you after you cast a vote for him? A lot of GOP lawmakers are buzzing about it, and many are none too pleased with the president right now . **Story: "AP sources: Trump tells senators House health bill 'mean,'" by Alan Fram.**

<http://apne.ws/2t0vZnB>

ONE MORE QUICK THOUGHT -- Republicans on the Hill spent years decrying behind-the-scenes machinations of government. Now they have an attorney general that is refusing to discuss his conversations with the president. And a Senate majority that seeking to pass a major health-care bill without hearings.

FOR THE WEST WING -- "Poll: Voters trust Comey over Trump," by Steven Shepard: "Voters have greater faith in former FBI Director James Comey to tell the truth than in President Donald Trump, who has disputed the veracity of Comey's sworn testimony before a Senate committee last week. A new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll conducted in the days following Comey's appearance before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 45 percent of voters said they trust Comey more to tell the truth, compared to 32 percent for Trump. Twenty-three percent have no opinion."

<http://politi.co/2rvcoJY>

NYT A1, GLENN THRUSH, MAGGIE HABERMAN AND JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS -- "Trump Stews, Staff Steps In, and Mueller Is Safe for Now": "[T]he president ... began entertaining the idea of firing Mr. Mueller even as his staff tried to discourage him from something they believed would turn a bad situation into a catastrophe, according to several people with direct knowledge of Mr. Trump's interactions. ... For now, the staff has prevailed. 'While the president has every right to' fire Mr. Mueller, 'he has no intention to do so,' the White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters late Tuesday.

"But people close to Mr. Trump say he is so volatile they cannot be sure that he will not change his mind about Mr. Mueller if he finds out anything to lead him to believe the investigation has been compromised. And his ability to endure a free-ranging investigation, directed by Mr. Mueller, that could raise questions about the legitimacy of his Electoral College victory, the topic that most provokes his rage, will be a critical test for a president who has continued on Twitter and elsewhere to flout the advice of his staff, friends and legal team."

"Among the aides most alarmed by the idea of firing Mr. Mueller ... was Reince Priebus ... Donald F. McGahn II, the White House counsel, has also advised against firing Mr. Mueller. Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and adviser, supported firing Mr. Comey, but he has been less pugnacious lately, administration officials said. Mr. Trump's wife, Melania, has adopted a more temperate tone, telling her husband that she believed the appointment of Mr. Mueller would speed resolution of the Russia scandal and expressing her view that he would be exonerated, according to two people with direct knowledge of her advice." <http://nyti.ms/2rpXNEu>

-- **@nickconfessore:** "The first senior Trump official to leave and write a dishy tell-all about life in the White House is going to make a lot of money."

DARREN SAMUELSON, "6 explosive moments that could still come in Russia probe: The president and his attorneys are showing an increasing willingness to play hardball": "The Trump-Russia investigation is moving at a breakneck pace compared with past White House scandals. ... [H]ere are six potent powder kegs awaiting Trump, Mueller and Congress: Executive privilege ... Lawyer versus lawyer: More than a dozen lawyers are already working on behalf of Trump and his associates in the Russia investigation ... Trump's tax returns ... A grand jury: The federal courthouse in Washington could become the center of the political universe. ... [T]he Constitution Avenue location is a likely spot where he might convene a grand jury for witness testimony in his investigation and for potential criminal indictments. ... Presidential interference ... Indictments ... As Mueller brings the probe to a close, he could face perhaps the most explosive of all decisions: whether to prosecute the president himself." <http://politi.co/2t0Sdpm>

GARY COHN MANAGING FED CHIEF SEARCH -- WSJ'S NICK TIMIRAOS and KATE DAVIDSON -- "Officials won't publicly outline any timetable for their decision or shortlist of candidates. Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen's term runs through January, and President Donald Trump didn't rule out her reappointment in an April interview. Ms. Yellen's reappointment isn't an outcome many observers expect because of Mr. Trump's fierce criticism of her during the final weeks of last year's presidential campaign. But his willingness to consider her speaks to the amicable relationship they have forged since Mr. Trump took office, observers say.

"Since taking office, the president and his advisers haven't publicly questioned the Fed's actions -- including its decision to raise short-term interest rates in March. The Fed has also signaled it is likely to raise rates again at its two-day meeting that concludes Wednesday. An alternative to Ms. Yellen could be Mr. Cohn, who became Mr. Trump's top economic adviser after a 26-year career at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Mr. Cohn has emerged as a key intermediary in the administration's relationship with the central bank." <http://on.wsj.com/2t4Z1p>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: The Trump administration is holding two "listening sessions" today at the White House. At 10 a.m., **HHS SECRETARY TOM PRICE** and **CMS**

ADMINISTRATOR SEEMA VERMA are meeting with 13 doctors for an Obamacare session. **List of the doctors** <http://politi.co/2rZlcu0> **NEC DIRECTOR GARY COHN** is then hosting one on tax reform at 2:30 p.m. **The participants:** Mitch Bainwol of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers; Jake Jones of the Alliance and the Daimler Group; Curtis Magleby of the American Automotive Policy Council and Ford; Matt Blunt of AAPC, Victoria Barnes of AAPC and GM; Howard Hakes, Cody Lusk and Rachel Robinson of the American International Automobile Dealers Association, Robert Redding and Robert Wills of the Automotive Service Association, John Bozella and Paul Ryan of Global Automakers, Doug Murtha of Global Automakers and Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Steve Handschuh and Lacy Wilson of the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association; David Regan, Mark Scarpelli, and Pete Welch of the National Auto Dealers Association; and Damon Lester of the National Association of Minority Dealers.

***** **A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** Led by scientists and engineers, POET operates 30 biofuel facilities & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. We produce a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. We're POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). *****

THE BIG PICTURE -- NANCY COOK and ANDREW RESTUCCIA: "Trump tries to master the art of the tiny": "Bill Clinton salvaged his presidency by focusing on small-ball policy wins. Now Team Trump is trying to master the art of thinking tiny. Faced with a rising drumbeat of scandal stemming from ongoing Russia probes, President Donald Trump is continuing to pursue a big, complicated legislative agenda -- repealing Obamacare, reforming the tax system and passing an infrastructure package.

"Any of those would be hard to achieve in perfect circumstances, but with the GOP ideologically fragmented and the White House distracted by legal trouble, it's increasingly difficult to imagine Trump landing a big win. Veterans of past White Houses say if the president wants to keep Republican voters on his side, it's time to turn his attention to putting forward discrete, achievable policy proposals that he can actually get done. ...

"The White House seems to be getting the message. For months, executive branch actions to unwind or rewrite regulations got little notice. But in recent weeks, wonkier policies are getting more fanfare, with briefings for reporters and appearances by Cabinet officials in the press room. On Wednesday, Trump is expected to announce the reorganization of government job training programs at the Labor Department as part of the White House's 'workforce development week' -- the latest in the administration's recent efforts to highlight tangible, limited goals like privatizing air traffic control or slashing regulations. An administration official said the White House is planning more policy-themed weeks in the coming months, including one on energy tentatively scheduled for late June. The official said the weeks are aimed at unifying the White House's message." <http://politi.co/2s9zQP9>

THE HEARING -- "5 takeaways from Sessions' Russia testimony," by Seung Min

Kim and Josh Gerstein: "Sessions' go-to line: 'I don't recall' ... The 'I don't recall' line was a reliable response from the attorney general during the nearly three-hour grilling, particularly about one of the biggest questions raised before his testimony - whether he had further undisclosed meetings with Russian officials. ... **Senate Republicans run interference.** While Democrats were harsh toward Sessions, nearly all Republicans treated him gingerly. ... **Sessions rattled under pressure.** The still-new attorney general has had little practice at the witness table, and it showed as he became rattled under questioning from Democrats who have accused him of not being forthcoming about his interactions with Russian officials. ...

"Sessions and his deputy show some daylight. Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein were testifying on Capitol Hill simultaneously Tuesday, but they weren't always in sync. One such moment came when Sessions testified that Comey likely had an obligation to notify Congress when new evidence emerged in the probe into Hillary Clinton's State Department emails last October. ... **Unasked questions.** ... The most glaring: Did Sessions ever offer to resign due to Trump's dissatisfaction with his job performance, as several news outlets have reported? The attorney general might have punted, but his reaction might have betrayed the answer." <http://politi.co/2rZVt60>

SURROUND-SOUND -- "Nearly 200 Democratic lawmakers sue Trump citing business conflicts," by USA Today's Steve Reilly: "Nearly 200 Democratic members of Congress filed a lawsuit against President Trump on Wednesday morning alleging that his continued ties to his business empire violate the U.S. Constitution. The unprecedented legal action accuses Trump of violating the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits federal officials from accepting gifts or titles from foreign governments without congressional approval. The lawsuit will have the greatest number of congressional plaintiffs of any lawsuit against the president in the nation's history, according to Michigan Rep. John Conyers, the House Judiciary Committee's top-ranking Democrat. 'We do this not out of any sense of pleasure or partisanship, but because President Trump has left us with no other option,' he said." <https://usat.ly/2szveo0>

-- **Democratic lawmakers** will hold a press conference at 10 a.m. in the LBJ Room.

-- **THE ORIGINAL SCOOP. HEATHER CAYGLE**, on June 7: "**Democrats to sue Trump over conflicts of interest**" <http://politi.co/2rvm2fS>

REMINDER: WE ARE STILL AT WAR -- "Trump gives Pentagon authority to set troop levels in Afghanistan," by WaPo's Thomas Gibbons-Neff: "President Trump has given the Pentagon new authority to decide the troop levels in Afghanistan, a U.S. official said Tuesday. The move could lead to a deployment of thousands more troops as commanders decide the way forward in the 15-year-old war. The U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk candidly, said the move is similar to the April decision that gave the Pentagon more authority to set troop levels in Iraq and Syria. The change, the Pentagon said, was so units could deploy at their proper strength to better

maintain unit cohesion." <http://wapo.st/2smOKDF>

VIRGINIA GUV RACE: NORTHAM VS. GILLESPIE -- GREGORY SCHNEIDER in **WAPO**: "Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam won the Democratic nomination for governor of Virginia Tuesday by an unexpectedly wide margin, and Republican Ed Gillespie held off a surprising challenge from Donald Trump acolyte Corey A. Stewart for that party's nomination. ...

"[G]illespie edged past Stewart by just over a percentage point - fewer than 4,500 votes. ... The nation was watching Virginia as a political laboratory for how the political parties handle the deep divisions that followed last year's election of President Trump. The establishment forces seemed to win out, as Virginia voters resisted efforts to pull further to the right or left. Perriello channeled the energy -- and endorsement -- of progressive leader Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) as he tried to shake up the Democratic Party, but fell short in his bid to bring in enough new voters from among the young and working class to overcome Northam's command of the Democratic machine, including the endorsement of nearly every Democratic elected leader in state or federal office." <http://wapo.st/2srh5cL>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- THE OBAMACARE POLITICAL WAR: Save My Care -- a group working to pressure lawmakers not to kill the Affordable Care Act -- is spending six figures on radio ads in Alaska, Maine, Nevada and West Virginia to urge senators to oppose repealing the law.

-- **SCRIPT** from the West Virginia ad: "Behind closed doors in Washington, they're working in secret to rush through a health-care repeal bill that will devastate care for West Virginians - hitting our rural communities and hospitals the hardest But it can't pass without Senator Capito. She'll be a deciding vote. She'll decide whether your costs go up by thousands of dollars ... whether you're one of the hundred twenty thousand West Virginians who will lose coverage altogether.

"Capito will decide whether your rural hospital can keep its doors open. ... whether Medicaid is gutted ... whether you or your loved one will lose access to opioid abuse treatment. Capito will even decide whether insurers can impose lifetime limits on your coverage. Unless Senator Capito votes no on healthcare repeal, the doors to affordable healthcare for West Virginia could be closed for good. Call Senator Capito at 304-347-5372 and tell her to vote no on health-care repeal." **Audio of all the radio spots** <http://bit.ly/2tkTjf7>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Meadows: Freedom Caucus eyeing \$1.5 trillion debt ceiling increase," by Rachael Bade: "Some House Freedom Caucus conservatives want to raise the debt ceiling by a smaller amount than the Trump Administration would like -- just long enough to clear the 2018 mid-term elections, the group's leader said Tuesday. The Freedom Caucus has not taken an official position on a specific number. But Chairman Mark Meadows emerged from a group meeting Tuesday night saying some of his conservative compadres are looking at a \$1.5 trillion lift in the nation's

borrowing cap. The North Carolina Republican said that's smaller than the \$2.5 trillion he believes the White House wants." <http://politi.co/2tl0GDn>

-- **NOTE:** These decisions are driven by anticipated market reaction. The GOP leadership and the White House are unlikely to agree to anything that will rattle markets.

INTERESTING READ -- "Jewish Groups Struggle to Gain White House Access Points," by Jerusalem Post's Michael Wilner: "Jewish American organizations long active in Washington politics are struggling to communicate with the Trump administration, scavenging through old Rolodexes and e-mail lists to find points of access into the president's small policy team. A traditional structure governed these communications before the Trump era: Presidents since Jimmy Carter have hired White House Jewish liaisons to serve as point men for the community. But the position has been vacant since January 20, and the White House has no plans to fill it, a senior administration official told The Jerusalem Post on Tuesday." <http://bit.ly/2t0OurM>

THE JUICE ...

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Country Star Kalie Shorr will sing her hit "Fight Like A Girl" at Congressional Women's Softball Game (CWSG) one week from today, June 21 at 7 p.m. at Watkins Recreation Center. Shorr's song has received over 1.6 million streams on Spotify and is the walk-up song for the Member team co-captain Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.). Celebrity base umpires for the game include Mystics STAR Elena Della Donne, Erica May-Scherzer, Nationals pitcher Max Scherzer's wife, and Monica Abbott, the top female softball player in the nation (and first to sign a \$1-million contract). The CWSG raises funds for the Young Survival Coalition and is taking place the same week as the 45th anniversary of Title IX.

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK:** The League of Conservation Voters is launching a national summer-long campaign on Wednesday afternoon called "Our Lands, Our Vote." They are spending \$500,000 initially to support national monuments, and the campaign will try to submit 250,000 comments to Interior in support of protecting them.

-- **THE SPIGOT IS STILL OPEN IN GEORGIA:** The GOP leadership aligned Congressional Leadership Fund disclosed another \$105,514 in Georgia's sixth congressional district to boost Karen Handel and try to take down Jon Ossoff, according to an FEC report made public Tuesday.

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- WHAT LUKE RUSSERT IS READING -- Restoration Hardware becoming Wawa in Georgetown? -- PoPville <http://bit.ly/2tkYCeJ>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Attorney General Jeff Sessions is sworn-in prior to testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill on June 13. | Alex Brandon/Pool/Getty

NYT'S MIKE ISAAC in SAN FRANCISCO: "Uber Embraces Major Reforms as Travis Kalanick, the C.E.O., Steps Away": "In Uber's continuing attempt to repair its reputation over a series of scandals stemming from its bad-boy culture, its co-founder Travis Kalanick said he would take a leave of absence as chief executive. The company also announced it would embark on a sweeping reorganization to ensure that executives are more closely supervised by its board of directors.

"At a packed meeting with employees on Tuesday morning, Uber released 13 pages of recommendations compiled as part of an investigation into sexual harassment and other wrongdoing conducted by the former attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr. and his law firm, Covington & Burlington.

"But even as Uber promised to reform itself, an exchange between board members onstage highlighted the company's challenges. In front of employees, the board member Arianna Huffington talked about how having one female director typically leads to more female directors. David Bonderman, a fellow board member and a founding partner at the private equity firm TPG, replied that adding more women to the board would result in 'more talking.' The remark left people aghast, according to those who were there, and set off a storm of criticism on Twitter. Mr. Bonderman later apologized to Ms. Huffington and Uber's employees in an email, before resigning from the board a few hours later." <http://nyti.ms/2snxNcu> ... **Holder's report** <http://bit.ly/2s00cEM>

SCOOP -- "Most Trump real estate now sold to secretive buyers," by USA Today's Nick Penzenstadler, Steve Reilly and John Kelly: "Since President Trump won the Republican nomination, the majority of his companies' real estate sales are to secretive shell companies that obscure the buyers' identities, a USA TODAY investigation has found. Over the last 12 months, about 70% of buyers of Trump properties were limited liability companies - corporate entities that allow people to purchase property without revealing all of the owners' names. That compares with about 4% of buyers in the two years before." <https://usat.ly/2snclyu>

DROPPING OUT -- "Brian Burns withdraws as Trump's nominee for Ambassador to Ireland," by Irish Central's Niall O'Dowd: "Brian F. Burns, the US ambassador-designate to Ireland has withdrawn his name from consideration for the job, citing health issues, IrishCentral has learned. It is believed that Burns and President Trump exchanged letters in which the attorney and leading Irish American philanthropist revealed his reasons for stepping aside. Burns, 81, was considered a remarkably good choice by Trump, given his long career of devotion to Irish issues, including the creation of the John J. Burns Library at Boston College and as a senior official of the American Ireland Fund." <http://bit.ly/2tkT83r>

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scientists and engineers, POET is a biofuels company built from innovation. POET operates 30 biofuel facilities across eight states & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. Across the country, we support 40,000 renewable energy jobs producing a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. Inside the Beltway, we advocate for pro-biofuel policies to remove barriers to consumer fuel choices with a Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fix, support a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, and open new markets for U.S. exports and trade. We are securing a cleaner future for all of us. We are POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). *****

POLITICO MAGAZINE: "Meet the Two Princes Reshaping the Middle East: But for good or ill?" by Simon Henderson: "The dramatic and sudden effort to isolate Qatar, like the fateful intervention before it in Yemen, sprang from the shared vision of two princes. Depending on your point of view, they may be the harbingers of a new and better Middle East-or reckless architects of disaster. Indeed, the region's most important relationship may be the dynamic duo of Muhammad bin Salman, the 31-year-old deputy crown prince of Saudi Arabia, and Muhammad bin Zayed, the 56-year-old crown prince of Abu Dhabi, the lead sheikhdom of the United Arab Emirates. ... Together, they have shrewdly cultivated President Donald Trump, who is eager to show that he has a new strategy for defeating terrorism and confronting Tehran." <http://politi.co/2ruLLZl>

-- "Trump's move to deport Iraqi Christians stirs outcry," by Nahal Toosi: "President Donald Trump is facing anger and potential political blowback as his administration ramps up efforts to deport Iraqi Christians, a group he'd pledged to protect from what the U.S. calls a genocide in the Middle East. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents over the weekend detained dozens of Iraqi Christians and others to send back to Iraq. Many of them were picked up in Michigan, a swing state that Trump barely won in 2016 and the home of a sizable number of Christians from Muslim-majority countries who backed Trump during the presidential campaign." <http://politi.co/2rg856c>

MEDIWATCH -- "Layoffs To Hit HuffPost This Week," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "The HuffPost newsroom is bracing for a round of layoffs this week, according to four people familiar with the matter. The cuts are said to be coming as early as Wednesday. ... The Wall Street Journal reported last week that about 15% of employees, or 2,100 people, will lose their jobs at Yahoo and AOL, which have become a combined entity called Oath." <http://bzfd.it/2sn5OcV>

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- at Walter Russell Mead's 65th birthday party last night: Elliott Abrams, Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.), Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and his wife Anna, Scooter Libby, former Pakistani ambassador Husain Haqqani, Adam Garfinkle, Ben Haddad, Hannah Thoburn. Cotton gave a toast.

SPOTTED: Justin Fairfax, newly elected Virginia Democratic nominee for lieutenant

governor of Virginia, thanking his family, friends and supporters last night at Arlington's William Jeffrey's Tavern ... Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y) joining callers at the DCCC last night making phone calls in support of Jon Ossoff ahead of the special election. The phone bank was organized by Slaughter and Democrats in the NY delegation. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2snsBVE> ... <http://bit.ly/2s9Fd0w> ... University of Michigan Football head Coach Jim Harbaugh and UM Grad Ryan Eaton of Quicken Loans government relations team in the Delta Sky360 Club taking in the Nationals-Braves Game on Tuesday night in DC. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2ruKC0v>

OUT AND ABOUT - Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Sergio Gor hosted an off the record Bourbon tasting last night in the senator's Russell office featuring four of Kentucky's best bourbons. **SPOTTED:** Tara Palmeri, Gabby Morrongiello, Paul Bedard, Donna Cassata, Ted Fioraliso, Peter Doocy, Doug Stafford, Matthew Hawes, Alex Pappas, Juliegrace Brufke, Walt Cronkite, Michael Memoli, Jeremy Herb, Burgess Everett, Suzanne Kianpour, Matt Boyle, Amanda House, Nihal Krishan, Alex Bolton, Cherie Paquette, Rob Lockwood, Elise Norris, Kerry Young, Andrew Desiderio, Kevin Cirilli.

-- **SPOTTED** at the 17th annual interfaith Ramadan Iftar dinner last night, hosted at the Mt. Vernon estate of Ray and Shaista Mahmood: DHS Secretary John Kelly, Former DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff and Meryl Chertoff, Reps. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.), Andre Carson (D-Ind.), Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.), Mark Sanford (R-S.C.), former Reps. Jim Moran (D-Va.) and Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), Indonesian Ambassador Budi Bowoleksono and Reshanty Bowoleksono, Japanese Ambassador Kenichir?? Sasae, Pakistani Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, former U.S. Ambassador for Religious Freedom Rabbi David Saperstein, Father Mark Morozowich of Catholic University, Imam Mohamed Maged of the ADAMS Center in Sterling, Virginia, Pastor Bob Roberts of Northwood Community Baptist Church, Keller, Texas, Imam Hamza Yusuf Hanson, Grover and Samah Norquist, Suhail A. Khan and Jana Plat, John Malcolm of the Heritage Foundation and Mary Lee Malcolm.

-- **The Institute for Education** and Coach Kathy Kemper partnered with Sylvie Lucas, the Ambassador of Luxembourg to the United States, for their #IFEWomeninPower dinner last night at the Grand Duchy Embassy in Dupont Circle. Jennifer Griffin, who covers national security and the Pentagon at Fox News, was the special guest in an off the record convo. **SPOTTED:** Nancy Cordes, Kristen Honey, Finland Ambassador to the U.S. Kristi Kauppi, Jordanian Amb. Dina Kavar, Rwanda Amb. Mathilde Mukantabana, Jennifer Rudy, Sita Sonty, Cori Zarek, Cecilia Vega, and Jan Smith.

TRANSITIONS - The DNC has hired **Sabrina Singh** to serve as its deputy communication director in charge of the regional media program and coalitions media. She comes from American Bridge, where she served as the deputy communications director. ... **Whitney Mitchell Brennan** has been promoted to communications director for Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), previously she served as deputy communications director. **Alexandria Phillips** joined Gillibrand's office this week as press secretary. A HFA alum, she was previously director of surrogates and media affairs for Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer. ...

... Mercury has hired **Fernando Espuelas**, a veteran journalist who co-founded StarMedia, to be co-chairman. <http://politi.co/2rpLBDP> ... Cambridge Analytica has named **Ben Shankle** and **Laquan Austion** as VPs to jointly lead the firm's political operations in D.C. Shankle most recently spent two years as the data director for the Republican Party of Florida. Austion most recently worked on Lyft's government relations team where he oversaw all east coast markets. <http://politi.co/2rpYpdi>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Kristin Huguet, in comms at Apple

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Brian Fallon, CNN contributor, president of Barracks Row Media and senior advisor for Priorities USA. How he's celebrating: "I will spend most of the day fending off bad jokes about sharing a birthday with Donald Trump. Next week, I am going home to Boston with my wife and kids, and my brother and I will be at David Ortiz's number retirement ceremony at Fenway on June 23rd." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2s9kSbR>

BIRTHDAYS: Mack McLarty, No Labels Vice-Chair and former Chief of Staff to Bill Clinton (h/t Dennis Craig) ... Dan Schwerin, former director of speechwriting for Hillary Clinton ... House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer is 78 ... Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-Ohio) is 63 ... Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.) is 73 ... former Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.) is 74 ... The U.S. Army is 242 ... Campbell Brown, Facebook's head of news partnerships (h/t Erika Masonhall) ... Leon Wieseltier is 65 ... Russian-born billionaire and philanthropist Leonard "Len" Blavatnik is 6-0 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Anthony Zampelli, LA for Rep. Dan Donovan, is 25 (h/t Joe Kalmin) ... Christopher Gahan, former COS to Sens. Pat Toomey and Judd Gregg who is now VP of federal relations and GR at Northwestern Mutual, is 43 ... Amber Marchand, managing director at Hamilton Place Strategies (h/t Ken Spain) ... Alexandra Veitch, VP of gov't relations at CSRA ... Regan Page is 27 ... Danny Gaynor, in strategy and messaging at Nike ... cheese-loving Kristen Bartoloni, partner at Silver Street Strategies ...

... **Sara Armstrong**, COS of the RNC (h/t Ryan Mahoney) ... Iowa Republican donor/activist Bruce Rastetter is 61 ... Chris Bleak ... Brussels-based Politico tech reporter Laurens Cerulus is 3-0 ... Bill Wasserman of M+R (h/t Jon Haber) ... Jon Lentz, editor-in-chief at City & State ... Shomik Sarkar, former director of reporting for HFA, now a data scientist at the DNC (h/t Eric Heggie) ... Sarah Chen ... WaPo's Josh Hicks, covering Maryland politics, is 37 ... Leslie Ogden ... former Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams ... Chris Liddell-Westefeld ... Carol Apelt ... Quinn Johnson ... Mary Ann Preskul ... Linda Beitelspacher ... Scot Ross, the pride of Pittsburgh ... Dee Simpson (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Brandon Hall is 42 ... Rachel Williams Ellis ... Ashley Samelson McGuire ... Roland Rydstrom ... Kenan Block, an MSNBC alum, is 63 ... Pat Proctor is 46 ... Bob de Maria .. David Parsons ... Andrew Bair ... Boy George is 56 ... International Tennis Hall of Famer Steffi Graf is 48 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** Led by scientists and engineers, POET is a biofuels company built from innovation. POET

operates 30 biofuel facilities across eight states & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. Across the country, we support 40,000 renewable energy jobs producing a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. Inside the Beltway, we advocate for pro-biofuel policies to remove barriers to consumer fuel choices with a Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fix, support a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, and open new markets for U.S. exports and trade. We are securing a cleaner future for all of us. We are POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). *****

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To: AO OPA Individual News Clips[AO_OPA_Ind_News_Clips@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Mon 3/12/2018 3:06:41 PM
Subject: The Hill: EPA hired right-leaning media firm to compile its 'year in review', 3/9/18

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/finance/377659-epa-hired-right-wing-media-firm-to-compile-its-year-in-review>

EPA hired right-leaning media firm to compile its 'year in review'

By Miranda Green, 3/9/18, 3:54 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency paid a media group that largely works with Republicans thousands of dollars to compile the agency's annual "year in review" report, according to public financial documents.

Go Big Media, a right-leaning digital consulting and advertising firm, was paid \$6,500 by the EPA in February to create the report, E&E News first reported. One of the company's previous clients include Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, when he ran for Congress in Montana.

The company's founder, Philip Stutts, also regularly appears as a commentator on Fox News, according to Go Big Media's website.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox confirmed the contract, highlighting that it was the cheapest option.

"We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house. This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager's PR firm to run EPA's What's Upstream campaign," Wilcox said in a statement.

The report, released Monday, touted the EPA's top achievements and highlighted, among other

things, a The Hill article entitled: "EPA staffing falls to Regan-era levels."

Other accomplishments highlighted in the report included the agency's rescinding of the Waters of the United States rule and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's directive to remove scientists from sitting on advisory boards who receive agency grant funding.

"Administrator Pruitt's directive ensures that EPA's Federal Advisory Committees (FACs) provide a diverse and independent range of perspectives. Members serving on an EPA FAC shall not simultaneously receive grants from the agency," the report read.

In December, Mother Jones first reported that Pruitt paid a Republican opposition research firm \$120,000 to provide media monitoring. Days after the news broke, the EPA rescinded the no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs.

"How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor," Wilcox told The Hill at the time.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 7/17/2017 5:26:58 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing: SPICER back at the podium for an off-camera briefing -- Mar-a-Lago visitor logs to be released -- WASHINGTONIAN'S best cheap eats in D.C.

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By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

SPICER RETURNS -- Sean is briefing at 2 p.m. today. Alas, it's off camera. The last time the White House held an on-camera briefing was June 29.

Good Monday afternoon. FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- SPEAKER PAUL RYAN will be in Nantucket Thursday evening to raise money for Team Ryan, his joint fundraising effort. Tickets start at \$2,500 and \$10,000 gets you a photo. **KEN KIES** and his wife Kathy are hosting the event.

-- **SPOTTED:** Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) at the Nantucket airport Monday morning.

SIREN -- MAR-A-LAGO VISITOR LOGS TO BE RELEASED -- CREW, the National Security Archive and the Knight First Amendment Institute announced that the Department of Homeland Security will turn over visitor logs from Mar-a-Lago by Sept 8. CREW pledged to publicly release the logs once they receive them.

BUT, BUT, BUT ... POLITICO'S FOIA AND TRANSPARENCY GURU JOSH GERSTEIN writes: "It's still going to be an uphill battle for watchdogs to get their hands on records detailing Trump's visitors. When the Sept. 8 deadline comes up, the Secret Service can produce a bunch of blacked-out pages, withholding the nitty-gritty on privacy or national security or law enforcement security grounds or executive privilege grounds.

"**They could also resort to the claim** that the records aren't really the Secret Service's, but the White House's. Both the George W. Bush and Obama administration's took that stance and won in the D.C. Circuit. That's part of why the suit was filed in New York. Most importantly, people seem to have come and gone from Mar-a-Lago since November for all kinds of events without any advance registration with the Secret Service, so it seems doubtful the Service has any comprehensive list. In short, don't hold your breath."

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE -- @realDonaldTrump at 10:07 a.m.: "Most politicians would have gone to a meeting like the one Don jr attended in order to get info on an opponent. That's politics!"

INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE - "Trump's trade warrior prowls the West Wing," by Nancy Cook and Andrew Restuccia: "Peter Navarro, one of the White House's top trade advisers, is widely viewed throughout the West Wing and Capitol Hill as a prickly personality with extreme policy ideas. But he has nonetheless emerged as an influential force in the White House who appeals to President Donald Trump's protectionist impulses. Navarro has earned a reputation for stalking the halls of the West Wing at night and on the weekends to find a moment to slip into the Oval Office to privately discuss trade with the president, according to one White House official and a close adviser to the administration. It's his way of maintaining influence through proximity. ...

"He has since pulled the president so far right on trade that more moderate aides worry his proposals could launch a global trade war if Trump takes them too seriously, according to a dozen interviews with White House officials, close advisers, and Republican congressional aides." <http://politi.co/2vakmvk>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- READ EVERY WORD -- L.A. TIMES: "An overdose, a young companion, drug-fueled parties: The secret life of USC med school dean," by Paul Pringle, Harriet Ryan, Adam Elmahrek, Matt Hamilton and Sarah Parvini: "In USC's lecture halls, labs and executive offices, Dr. Carmen A. Puliafito was a towering figure. The dean of the Keck School of Medicine was a renowned eye surgeon whose skill in the operating room was matched by a gift for attracting money and talent to the university. There was another side to the Harvard-educated physician.

"During his tenure as dean, Puliafito kept company with a circle of criminals and drug users who said he used methamphetamine and other drugs with them, a Los Angeles Times investigation found. Puliafito, 66, and these much younger acquaintances captured their exploits in photos and videos. The Times reviewed dozens of the images." <http://lat.ms/2u1STgR>

EXIT INTERVIEW -- "Outgoing Ethics Chief: U.S. Is 'Close to a Laughingstock'," by NYT's Eric Lipton and Nicholas Fandos: "Actions by President Trump and his administration have created a historic ethics crisis, the departing head of the Office of Government Ethics said. He called for major changes in federal law to expand the power and reach of the oversight office and combat the threat. Walter M. Shaub Jr., who is resigning as the federal government's top ethics watchdog on Tuesday, said the Trump administration had flouted or directly challenged long-accepted norms in a way that threatened to undermine the United States' ethical standards, which have been admired around the world.

"It's hard for the United States to pursue international anticorruption and ethics initiatives when we're not even keeping our own side of the street clean. It affects our credibility,' Mr. Shaub said in a two-hour interview this past weekend - a weekend Mr. Trump let the world know he was spending at a family-owned golf club that was being paid to host the U.S. Women's Open tournament. 'I think we are pretty close to a laughingstock at this point.' Mr. Shaub called for nearly a dozen legal changes to strengthen the federal ethics system: changes that, in many cases, he had not

considered necessary before Mr. Trump's election. Every other president since the 1970s, Republican or Democrat, worked closely with the ethics office, he said."

<http://nyti.ms/2vu2AT1>

AFTERNOON READS -- JOSH GREEN, author of "Devil's Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump, and the Storming of the Presidency" (out tomorrow), in Vanity Fair, **"Inside the Secret, Strange Origins of Steve Bannon's Nationalist Fantasia:** The chief strategist of Trump's triumph reveals his strange brew of intellectual influences, including a French-Egyptian Muslim occultist guru, and his apocalyptic view of history": "Though hardly a moralizing social conservative, he objected bitterly to the secular liberalism encroaching upon the culture. 'We shouldn't be running a victory lap every time some sort of traditional value gets undercut,' he once told me. When he was a naval officer in the late 1970s, Bannon, a voracious autodidact, embarked upon what he described as 'a systematic study of the world's religions' that he carried on for more than a decade. Taking up the Roman Catholic history first instilled in him at his Catholic military high school, he moved on to Christian mysticism and from there to Eastern metaphysics. (In the Navy, he briefly practiced Zen Buddhism before wending his way back to Catholicism.)

"Bannon's reading eventually led him to the work of René Guénon, an early-20th-century French occultist and metaphysician who was raised a Roman Catholic, practiced Freemasonry, and later became a Sufi Muslim who observed the Sharia. ... Guénon was a "primordial" Traditionalist, who believed that certain ancient religions, including the Hindu Vedanta, Sufism, and medieval Catholicism, were repositories of common spiritual truths, revealed to mankind in the earliest age of the world, that were being wiped out by the rise of secular modernity in the West. What Guénon hoped for, he wrote in 1924, was to 'restore to the West an appropriate traditional civilization.'"

<http://bit.ly/2utEFG5> ... **\$24.30 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2utkR30>

-- BEN WOFFORD in Washingtonian, "Inside the Radical, Self-Destructive, and Probably Impossible Plan to Move the Government Out of Washington": "It would work like this: The Swamp Act [sponsored by Reps. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio) and Ted Budd (R-N.C.)] calls for federal agencies to relocate their headquarters, thereby vacating 90 percent of their employees from Washington. In 2018, agency directors would identify a new home base, with special attention to cost savings and national security. In 2023, the exodus would begin. Davidson thinks the IT revolution means there's little reason to keep government in one place. Instead, federal power should reside closer to the people-in Cleveland, say, or Oklahoma City-emancipated at last from the Potomac Gomorrah. ...

"By design, the scheme would upend the lives of federal employees, not to mention private-sector workers and owners of property or a business here. Imagine the fury of real-estate brokers or car dealerships around Palo Alto if Google announced its departure to Boise, Hewlett Packard to San Antonio, and Facebook to Moline, Iowa, all at the same time." <http://bit.ly/2t88OqS>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- The Washington Kastles Charity Classic, a charity tennis tournament, is on July 27 at 7 p.m. at the Smith Center on GW's campus. Participants include Peter Alexander, Bret Baier, David Gregory, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Reps. Dave Brat (R-Va.) and Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.), former Sen. John Breaux (D-La.) and more. **Tickets** <http://bit.ly/2vtRKwq>

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "The Best Cheap Restaurants Around Washington, DC," by Washingtonian's Ann Limpert, Anna Spiegel, Jessica Sidman, Cynthia Hacinli and Kristen Hinman, with photos by Scott Suchman <http://bit.ly/2vulhWM>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- House Majority PAC expands California efforts -- Rauner chief campaign strategist jumps ship <http://politi.co/2vup4TW>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Politico now has 20,000 paid subscribers that account for half of its revenue," by Digiday's Max Willens <http://bit.ly/2vu12IX>

SPOTTED: Sens. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) and Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colo.) and Norm Brownstein of Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck all waiting to board the same flight to DCA at DEN.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- "Son of former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Andrew, marries Lithuanian-born real estate executive in one of Manhattan's oldest Roman Catholic churches" -- The Daily Mail: "Andrew met Zivile [Rezgyte] in 2014 at Derek Jeter's last game at Yankee Stadium and he proposed last August. ... Zivile emigrated from Lithuania 10 years ago and at the time couldn't even speak English. Now she is an American citizen and a successful executive at First American Title. Andrew is currently a public liaison assistant to President Donald Trump." **12 pix on one page** <http://dailym.ai/2vu1MO9>

--Mackenzie Jortner, co-founder of fundraising firm the Morning Group and an RNC alum, on Saturday married **Ollie Dolan** of the Dept. of Education, in Sewanee, Tennessee. Pool report: "The RNC Finance team that brought the [organization] out of debt in 2011 shut down 'Shenanigans' ... with the couple at the University of the South. The couple met on the dance floor of 'Dodge City' on U St." **Pic of the couple at the only bar in town, Shenanigans** <http://bit.ly/2t8bR2v> ... <http://bit.ly/2vapHmq>

SPOTTED: Angela Meyers, Emma Nelson, Dana Klein, Lauren Bryan, Lauren Kirshner, Annie Baker Hoar, Dougie Simmons and James Christoferson, John Umberger, Mimi Hayes, Alison McIntosh, and Cate and Stephen Duerst.

TRANSITIONS -- Ryan Duffy was hired as U.S. Sugar's new director of corporate communications. He was previously VP at Tallahassee firm Hill+Knowlton Strategies. ... **David Levine** was named the first COO of BerlinRosen. He is an Obama administration and Hillary for America alum. ... **Todd H. Halpern** has rejoined Venable as a partner in its FDA practice.

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<http://politi.co/1N7u5sb> ... **California Playbook** <http://politi.co/2bLvcPI> ... **Brussels**
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To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 8:44:37 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Yes, thanks

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:39 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

I've replaced the Hill story with the updated version. Otherwise good to send?

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:34 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Here is the updated Flint one: <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:13 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Forgot the attachment.

From: Hewitt, James

Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM

To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>; Graham, Amy <[graham.amy@epa.gov](mailto: graham.amy@epa.gov)>; Ferguson, Lincoln <[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov](mailto: ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov)>; Konkus, John <[konkus.john@epa.gov](mailto: konkus.john@epa.gov)>; Wilcox, Jahan <[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov](mailto: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov)>; Abboud, Michael <[abboud.michael@epa.gov](mailto: abboud.michael@epa.gov)>

Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that

carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in

Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government

\$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO₂ is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific

Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any

meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city’s drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

“Forgiving Flint’s past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city’s water system over time,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. “Forgiving the city’s debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint’s water system to continue.”

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness “will allow for state funding to be

spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns.”

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense

Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more

energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for

the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly

approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

James Hewitt

Environmental Protection Agency

Special Advisor for Public Affairs

(202) 578-6141

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Palich, Christian[palich.christian@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]
From: Lyons, Troy
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 12:41:37 PM
Subject: Re: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

A good stat. Since January we have received 416 letters from members of congress and responded to 386

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 13, 2017, at 8:36 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:35 AM
To: 'Alex Guillen' <aguillen@politico.com>
Cc: Anthony Adragna <aadragna@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Cool. I will send over the full table in a clean email.

From: Alex Guillen [<mailto:aguillen@politico.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:32 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Anthony Adragna <aadragna@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Looping in Anthony, ME's author, but those numbers are good for me to have on hand for when this inevitably comes up later.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:26 AM
To: Alex Guillen <aguillen@politico.com>
Subject: FW: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

So you include half the story (Carper's story) but not the other half (EPA's story) that we've received to 11 of the 20 letters and that 7 of the past 9 are under 30 days.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrat-tom-carper-wont-support-trumps-epa-nominee-because-he-says-scott-pruitt-is-a-bad-penpal/article/2625486>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 5:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature.

Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. [Kirsten Gillibrand](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. [Ed Markey](#) is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat [Tom Carper](#) told ME he met with Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 — just under three weeks! — but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning [vote](#) on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said — and reiterated Monday — that he'd like to eventually [package](#) Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is a getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA [rounded up](#) compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman [John Barrasso](#) echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman [Chuck Grassley](#) that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " [nonsense](#)."

If you go: The [hearing](#) starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [appears before](#) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then [heads to](#) a Senate Appropriations subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on more than two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction here.

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has proposed to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the States released an outline of its Cooperative Federalism 2.0 approach between EPA — which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" — and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy argues in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader — at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller reports. The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released [an analysis](#) finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. [Dan Kildee](#) holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) released a [letter](#) urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a [new report](#) today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior [launched](#) a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign — entitled "Your Energy" — educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website [here](#) (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

— Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. [Houston Chronicle](#).

— Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. [API](#).

— TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. [Bismarck Tribune](#).

— Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. [Des Moines Register](#).

— BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. [Reuters](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The Methanol Policy Forum](#)," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — Senate committee [hearing](#) on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "[Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success](#)," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — American Petroleum Institute holds briefing on E15 and the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: fangs@api.org

11:00 a.m. — Rep. Dan Kildee holds press conference call with Sierra Club and AFGE on

proposed EPA budget cuts, RSVP: mitchell.rivard@mail.house.gov

11:00 a.m. — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases report on ARPA-E program, National Academies' Keck Center, 500 Fifth St. NW, Room 100

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-023270>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

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Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials [instructed](#) government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen

last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance memo that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

To view online [click here](#).

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Zinke recommends shrinking Bears Ears monument [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument on Monday, trimming back the controversial Utah monument created by former President Barack Obama during his final days in office.

A preliminary review of the 1.4 million-acre monument that Zinke sent to the White House over the weekend shows his "belief that the monument needs to be right-sized," Zinke said in a statement.

Any move by President Donald Trump to alter the monument designed to protect thousands of sensitive archaeological sites will set off a legal fight with tribes and conservation groups that have complained the Native American ruins there were being damaged and would be threatened by oil and gas development in the area.

Zinke's preliminary recommendations to Trump show he did not plan to go as far as revoking Obama's monument designation — a move that has been sought by the state's congressional delegation.

"Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call.

Trump has ordered Zinke to review 22 of the national monuments that were established in the past two decades to determine if they should be altered or revoked. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House, and Zinke has extended the comment period on Bears Ears to July 10.

Zinke is also pressing Congress to look at the Bears Ears boundaries "to see whether the lands are more appropriately designated as national conservation areas or national recreation areas," he said. "There's certainly a high demand of recreation. There's certainly a demand for conservation in some parts, but we believe that those areas are better suited under congressionally mandated designations than they are a monument."

The secretary also asked Congress to grant tribes the ability to co-manage specific areas within Bears Ears, and for Congress to clarify how wilderness areas that overlap with monuments should be treated, an issue for Bears Ears and some other monuments under review.

A former congressman from Montana, Zinke cited his concern that the federal government restricts activities on the land it designates as protected, saying that designating a monument the size of Bears Ears where "multiple-use management is hindered or prohibited is not the best use of the land and is not in accordance with the intention of the Antiquities Act."

President Barack Obama created the monument in southeast Utah in December, angering Republicans who accused the administration of federal overreach by ignoring locals who opposed the move and using the Antiquities Act to cut off commercial activity such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Prior legislative attempts by the Utah delegation to curb federal monuments in the state have failed. Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz did manage last year to get their Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation through the Natural Resources Committee, which Bishop chairs, but it never received a floor vote.

If Trump ultimately decides to alter Bears Ears or the other monuments on the list, he is certain to face legal challenges from environmental groups. "An attack on one monument is an attack on all of them," said Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director at the Center for Western Priorities.

Past presidents have changed the size of monuments but none have revoked them entirely, and legal questions remain as to whether the law allows a president to fully undo their predecessor's actions.

Zinke last month traveled to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and this week he will head to New England to visit the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, which is also under review.

Zinke has repeatedly talked about the need to balance conservation with commercial and recreational demands on public lands, and has already this year ended the moratorium on new coal leases and launched reviews on ways to open up more areas for oil and gas development.

To view online [click here](#).

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Greens pan Zinke's Bears Ears plan, Utah lawmakers offer praise [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 05:02 PM EDT

Environmental and recreation groups slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation that President Donald Trump should shrink the Bears Ears National Monument, warning they would fight the move in court.

Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation, and NRDC President Rhea Suh said Zinke's proposal "sends a chilling signal about the Trump administration's intent to hand over irreplaceable American landscapes to mining and fossil fuel interests."

Zinke's preliminary report [recommended](#) Trump downsize the 1.4 million-acre Bears Ears monument and suggested Congress pass legislation that designates some portions as national recreation areas or national conservation areas.

But the Outdoor Industry Association noted that previous attempts to pass legislation on monuments in the last congress had fizzled. "We are worried that the legislative process would fail again, leaving these important areas unprotected," said Amy Roberts, OIA executive director.

Utah's Congressional delegation praised Zinke's call to reduce the size of the monument, even though the lawmakers had pushed to revoke the monument. Many of Zinke's recommendations are similar to a bill the delegation backed in the last Congress.

Sen. [Orrin Hatch](#) (R-Utah) in a tweeted [video](#) said Zinke's recommendation "reflects a balance of our shared priorities in protecting this land and the antiquities that are found on it, while still preserving local involvement and taking into consideration the needs of local communities." And Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) said Zinke's report "recognizes that local

input should matter."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke has until Aug. 24 to make his final report on all 22 monuments he is reviewing and the agency is accepting public comments on all of them through July 10.

To view online [click here](#).

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Eni submits plan to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/12/2017 05:54 PM EDT

BOEM is asking the public to weigh in on whether it should allow a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea.

Eni's move coincides with the Trump administration's push to open up more federal waters for oil and gas development. The Interior Department is currently reviewing how much of federal offshore holdings should be open to drilling.

Eni would drill into federal waters from its already existing facility in Alaska state waters, according to the [plan](#) it submitted to BOEM. The company proposes to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

WHAT'S NEXT: BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. The agency will take 30 days to evaluate Eni's plan.

To view online [click here](#).

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Why China Is No Climate Leader [Back](#)

By Elizabeth Economy | 06/12/2017 04:57 PM EDT

When President Donald Trump yanked America's support for the Paris Climate Accords, pundits were quick to hail China as the world's new environmental leader. Two veteran journalists [wrote](#) that the decision was "the greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world."

But is leadership on climate change really a strategic gift? Do the Chinese want it? And

above all, do they merit it? The quick answer is no, no and no.

True global leadership is costly: It requires vision, creativity, perseverance, deft diplomacy and often cold, hard cash. It also demands a willingness on the part of political leaders to align, and in some cases subordinate, their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community. The Chinese, including President Xi Jinping, understand this. That is why any number of Chinese analysts have been quick to reject the idea that Chinese leadership on climate change is realistic, arguing as one did, "Taking on global leadership is too much, too soon for China." Xi Jinping, himself, is somewhat less willing to reject the idea out of hand. China as a global power shaping norms and institutions is a central element of his rejuvenation narrative. He therefore flirts with the prospect, proclaiming China ready to defend globalization and to protect the Paris climate agreement. But nowhere does Xi say that China will actually lead; that is left to others.

So where does China stand on the climate leadership spectrum? First, the good. It will meet its Paris commitment: By 2030, China's CO₂ emissions will peak and its energy intensity (the amount of energy consumed per unit of GDP) will be reduced by 60-65 percent. In addition, Beijing is making strides toward rebalancing its energy mix. This year it cancelled 85 new coal fired power plants on top of the 18 that it cancelled last year; if brought on line, these 103 new plants would have exceeded China's 2020 targets of 1100GW of coal-fired power capacity by 150 GW. (By way of comparison, total U.S. energy produced from coal is 350GW.) Moreover, China has pledged not to approve new coal-fired power plants in as many as 13 provinces and regions until 2018. (Of course, one might reasonably ask what is happening in the other 18 provinces and regions, and what 2018 might bring.) China has also stepped up its commitment to renewable energy. In 2016 China invested \$78.3 billion in renewable energy—topping both Europe (\$59.8 billion) and the United States (\$46.4 billion). China also ranks first in terms of total installed renewable electric capacity. Much of this capacity, however, remains idle. In 2016, in three of the most wind power-rich provinces and regions—Gansu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia—for example, levels of curtailment (capacity not utilized) reached 43 percent, 38 percent and 21 percent respectively. The curtailment rate for solar energy was similarly high. In contrast, curtailment rates in the United States and Europe are generally between 0-5 percent. In the wait and see category, China is reportedly set to launch a nationwide CO₂ cap and trade system sometime this year. This system could be spectacular, or it could be spectacularly embarrassing.

Now the bad. China is still the largest emitter of CO₂ on the planet by a substantial margin, contributing 29 percent of the world's total CO₂ emissions in 2015. The United States comes in a distant second at 14 percent. In addition, while Beijing is cutting back on coal-fired power plants—particularly in its wealthy and pollution-conscious coastal provinces—it is upping its count of CO₂ emitting coal-to-chemical (including coal-to-gas) plants. There are 46 coal-to-chemical plants in operation and another 22 under construction that will add another 193 million tons of carbon emissions annually. A conservative estimate suggests that by 2020, such plants will contribute as much CO₂ as all of Poland's contribution to global carbon emissions, while the extreme scenario—if China builds all the coal-to-chemical plants outlined in its 13th Five Year Plan—will lead to a contribution of

almost 800 million tons per year, more than German's total carbon emissions in 2015, and equal to roughly 10 percent of China's current CO2 contribution.

China also falls short in the eyes of some independent monitoring groups that assess countries' climate commitments. The 2017 annual report by German Watch and the Climate Action Network ranks China 48th—just a few places behind the United States at 43rd—in terms of how much it has done to avoid climate change and how much it plans to do. True climate leadership belongs to the Europeans—France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, in particular—although even these climate leaders come in for some criticism. Moreover, the Climate Action Tracker, produced by three international research institutions, indicates that China's current emission reduction targets are not consistent with ensuring that the earth's warming remains below 2 degrees C.

And finally the ugly. Whatever positive steps China is taking at home are not being replicated in its behavior abroad. China is the world's largest exporter of coal-fired power plant finance and technology. Even as Xi is calling for an "international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road" (his comprehensive new trade and development initiative involving 65 countries), Beijing is backing more than 100 new coal-fired power projects in the Belt and Road countries. China's much-touted Belt and Road deals in Pakistan, for example, include plans for as many as 12 coal-fired power plants—even in areas recognized for their superior solar energy potential. In addition, China is actively pushing coal-to-chemical plants abroad. The Paris accords don't account for countries' actions outside their own borders, so China is not breaking the letter of its Paris commitments, but these Belt and Road investments are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the agreement.

Beyond the clear limitations of China's climate policies at home and abroad, there remains the larger question of diplomatic leadership. Will China rally other countries to adopt another round of more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets? Will it stop the overseas financing and sale of coal-fired power plants and coal-to-chemical plants? Will it push forward to limit other harmful greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane? Will it accede to international monitoring and verification of its emissions, an important measure it continues to reject? Thus far, there is no indication that China has plans to adopt any of these leadership-worthy measures.

When Trump, in the midst of withdrawing the United States from the Paris agreement, offered up the possibility of renegotiating the climate pact, the rest of the world in effect said, "not going to happen." Undoubtedly other countries are becoming accustomed to the idea of a world without American leadership. But filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today.

To view online [click here](#).

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Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon [leapt into the public eye](#) Monday morning via reports from security firms [Dragos](#) and [ESET](#). Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a [little-noticed cyberattack](#) on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 [digital strike](#) on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's cyber information sharing center on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An industry coordinating group known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy, according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to a summary report. But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload, the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

Tim Starks contributed to this report.

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DOJ will require GE to sell refinery chemicals business before Baker Hughes merger

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By Alex Guillén | 06/12/2017 03:52 PM EDT

The Justice Department today said it will require General Electric to sell off its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants the government's blessing to merge with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes.

GE in March announced [plans to sell that division](#) to Suez, a French water and energy company, for \$3.4 billion. Carrying out that sale will satisfy the DOJ.

GE and Baker Hughes together represent two of the four major providers of refinery chemicals and services, which are classified as "process technologies." Allowing GE and Baker Hughes to combine their refinery chemicals division would hurt competitiveness and drive up prices, the DOJ argued.

The DOJ filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department. The proposal is subject to 60 days of public comment and court approval.

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Zinke orders review of sage grouse plans [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/07/2017 07:17 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order on Wednesday launching an internal review of the agency's sage grouse conservation plans across 11 Western states that aims to foster increased energy development.

The order, which will be released Thursday morning, directs the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to identify parts in BLM's 98 land use management plans that should be tweaked or rescinded because of their effect on development or due to differences with each state's own plans.

The review will focus on principal threats to the sage grouse habitat, such as invasive grasses and wildland fire, and will consider options like captive breeding and setting population targets — something the governors of Wyoming and Colorado [warned](#) may not be the right approach. Zinke directed the team to report back within 60 days.

Some governors have complained that the current management plans set under the Obama administration hinder their ability to develop oil and gas resources and create hurdles for timber harvesting and recreation, Zinke said in a press call.

But former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told POLITICO on Wednesday the existing

management plans were "designed to be very flexible and to allow the states and the federal land management agencies to work together" to support both sage grouse conservation and energy development.

However, she acknowledged the agency's 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse as endangered or threatened was not fully hashed out. "When you do something on this scope and scale, you haven't refined all the details yet," Jewell said. What matters is that "everybody understands that they need to protect critical habitat if that decision to not list the bird is going to stick."

The Western Energy Alliance, an oil and gas industry group, has challenged some of the existing plans in court and says the agency ignored the technological advances that reduce the impact of fossil fuel extraction on the sage grouse habitat, which spans all of the major producing basins in Wyoming, Utah, Montana and parts of Colorado.

Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma said Interior should defer more to states since they know where the sage grouse is most active, and she isn't worried that reworking the plans could take years.

"What risk is there?" Sgamma said. "Development is at practically a standstill already in sage grouse habitat."

Conservation groups contend Zinke's move will prioritize energy development over conservation.

"Zinke seems to believe that the highest and best use of America's public lands is for the development of dirty fossil fuels and so it's unsurprising that he's proposing to take a look at gutting protections for an imperiled species to benefit that industry," said Ted Zukoski, an Earthjustice staff attorney who has represented conservation groups in legal battles over sage grouse plans in Wyoming and Utah.

Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said Zinke's idea to set population targets for states could actually increase the likelihood the FWS will later list the bird, since the agency would have to revisit the decision if states fail to meet their targets.

"The very thing that some folks and industry are fearing, which is not being able to do anything, would almost definitely occur if they went on the path they're proposing," O'Mara said.

Nada Culver, senior counsel and director of The Wilderness Society's BLM Action Center, said the existing plans do not need to be scrapped but rather the agency can better clarify how fossil fuel and renewable energy projects can be developed in sage grouse habitat. "There's room in the plan to do that," she said.

To view online [click here](#).

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From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Mon 3/12/2018 2:21:56 PM
Subject: AP: EPA hires GOP media firm to produce report praising Pruitt, 3/9/18

AP

<https://apnews.com/fc7f53cf670f49d384dbe8275a9ffb2c/EPA-hires-GOP-media-firm-to-produce-report-praising-Pruitt>

EPA hires GOP media firm to produce report praising Pruitt

By Michael Biesecker, 3/9/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency used public money to hire a private media firm with strong Republican ties to help produce a report promoting Administrator Scott Pruitt's first-year accomplishments.

Records show EPA paid \$6,500 last month Go Big Media Inc. for work related to "design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report." Go Big was founded by Republican political strategist Phillip Stutts and counts GOP candidates and conservative groups among its clients.

The 37-page report issued by the agency earlier this week references Pruitt by name 214 times. Of the two dozen photos included in the document, 20 include the administrator, a Republican who previously served that the elected attorney general of Oklahoma.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox defended the contract.

"We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house," Wilcox said.

It is at least the second time in the last year that EPA has hired a Republican-affiliated firm to assist its public affairs efforts.

In December, EPA pulled out of a \$120,000 no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs, a Virginia public relations firm founded by former Republican campaign operatives that specializes in opposition research on its clients' political opponents and corporate rivals. The New York Times reported that a senior vice president at the firm had filed at least 40 requests under the Freedom of Information Act, many of them seeking emails and other records from EPA employees who have spoken out against Pruitt's regulatory rollbacks.

Wilcox said the Go Big contract, which was first reported by E&E News, "pales in comparison" to the \$568,000 paid under the Obama administration to Strategies 360, a public relations firm co-founded by a former Democratic campaign manager.

In that case, the firm was hired by the Swinomish Indian Tribe, which received a portion of an EPA grant to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to help educate the public about clean water initiatives in Puget Sound. A subsequent review by EPA's Inspector General concluded last year that the payment to Strategies 360 did not violate federal lobbying prohibitions.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 5/2/2018 8:44:08 PM
Subject: Afternoon Energy: EPA trip adviser — PJM study cause for renewables' concerns — We meet again ... for the last time?

By Garrett Ross and David Beavers | 05/02/2018 04:42 PM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff

EPA TRIP ADVISER: On the heels of Tuesday's news that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's trips to Morocco and Rome were heavily steered by a lobbyist and a conservative associate, [The New York Times](#) reports that a planned trip to Australia got a lot of guidance from another former lobbyist. That person, Global Impact Inc. CEO Matthew C. Freedman, previously worked with President Donald Trump's campaign chairman Paul Manafort and was on the Trump transition team before he was removed for using an email associated with his firm to do government business. He is treasurer of the American Australian Council, a group that promotes American companies, including oil and gas giants Chevron and ConocoPhillips, in Australia.

According to [public records](#) obtained by the Sierra Club in a lawsuit, Freedman consulted with lobbyist Richard Smotkin about whom Pruitt should meet while in Australia, communicating with Pruitt's advance aide Millan Hupp. He also asked that his involvement not be disclosed, according to the Times' review of the public records. EPA spent about [\\$45,000](#) sending staffers ahead of Pruitt to Australia but ultimately canceled the trip when Hurricane Harvey devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast. Read more from Pro's Emily Holden [here](#).

PJM STUDY CAUSE FOR RENEWABLES' CONCERNS: PJM Interconnection's plan to study "fuel security" on its grid could box out wind and solar power and slow the growth of natural gas in the nation's largest power market, according to the grid operator and energy experts, Pro's Eric Wolff reports. The announcement this week, that it would stress test power sources that participate in its capacity market to see how they would fare if they lost access to fuel delivery, is in line with Energy Secretary Rick Perry's push to help the coal-fired and nuclear power plants he says are crucial for grid resilience.

Renewables advocates, however, say the new study would only bolster coal-fired and nuclear power plants that keep fuel supplies on site — which PJM CEO Andy Ott confirmed when he said Monday that renewable resources would be further discounted in the study, and that only "robust resources" would be counted. Mike Bryson, PJM's vice president of operations, said it would be difficult for wind and solar to be considered "secure fuel" sources during periods when extreme weather or grid disruptions knock out other generators.

The coal power industry sees the study as a move in the right direction. "Hopefully this PJM analysis would lead PJM to the conclusion that the grid cannot tolerate all these retirements, but we don't know yet — or at least they don't know yet," American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity CEO Paul Bailey said. Read more from Eric [here](#).

Welcome to Afternoon Energy! We're your hosts Garrett Ross and David Beavers. Send

suggestions, news and tips to gross@politico.com, dbeavers@politico.com, mdaily@politico.com and njuliano@politico.com, and keep up with us on Twitter at [@garrett_ross](https://twitter.com/garrett_ross), [@davidabeavers](https://twitter.com/davidabeavers), [@dailym1](https://twitter.com/dailym1), [@nickjuliano](https://twitter.com/nickjuliano), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

POLITICO's Ben White is bringing Morning Money to the Milken Institute Global Conference to provide coverage of the day's events and evening happenings. The newsletter will run April 29-May 2. **Sign up to keep up with your daily conference coverage.**

WE MEET AGAIN ... FOR THE LAST TIME? The major biofuel players will gather for a seventh meeting on the Renewable Fuel Standard next week, industry sources tell Eric. Sens. [Chuck Grassley](#) (R-Iowa), [Joni Ernst](#) (R-Iowa), [Ted Cruz](#) (R-Texas) and [Pat Toomey](#) (R-Pa.) will speak with Trump on Tuesday, for what one biofuels source said is most likely to be the final RFS meeting. Grassley and Ernst are likely to use the meeting to make sure that Trump follows through on his promise to allow year-round sales of 15 percent ethanol, while also pressing him to curb the use of the small refiners exemption. Cruz and Toomey are still seeking changes in the Renewable Fuel Standard to dramatically lower the program's compliance costs, though biofuel credit prices have fallen precipitously as the refinery exemptions have become public. Read more [here](#).

PERRY TO TESTIFY ON DOE BUDGET: Perry is headed back to Capitol Hill to testify on his department's budget proposal next week, this time in front of the House Science Committee, [Emily reports](#). The [hearing](#) will take place at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 9 in 2318 Rayburn.

POWELSON SLAMS ENERGY INDUSTRY, DOE: FERC Commissioner Rob Powelson took aim at officials from the energy industry and the Energy Department for trying to sidestep energy markets to bail out coal and nuclear power plants at a speech today, [Eric reports](#). DOE is considering using the Defense Production Act or the Federal Power Act to keep as many as 85 coal and nuclear power plants operating in the PJM Interconnection. "What [power markets are] not about is creating subsidies for non-economic resources that ratepayers are going to pay for," Powelson said at a conference organized by Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions. "These old inefficient power plants need to retire. You can't have a market when you're sending wrong price signals to people who need to enter and exit." Read more [here](#).

FERC SHOULD LOOK AT RTO GOVERNANCE, COMMISSIONER SAYS: Powelson thinks grid operators need to reconsider how their stakeholder process works. Rate and policy changes at grid operators often start in committees made up of stakeholders and bubble up until the RTO submits them to FERC. But PJM's submission of two rate proposals to FERC has exposed problems with the process. "There's an erosion of confidence in the stakeholder processes," Powelson told a conference today. "There's some great work done more recently taking a look at governing reforms to PJM, and I think that's something we're going to have a conversation at FERC about."

BIOFUELS COMPLAINT: The Advanced Biofuels Association filed a challenge to EPA's use of the small refinery exemption from the Renewable Fuel Standard on Tuesday, and the group

sent AE its [complaint](#) this morning. "We have seen reports that the number of small refinery exemptions recently granted for compliance years 2016 and 2017 have doubled compared to previous years," Michael McAdams, president of ABFA, said in a statement. "ABFA members are concerned that Administrator Pruitt is granting these exemptions in an arbitrary and capricious manner to undisclosed parties behind closed doors with no accountability for its decision-making process."

WHERE'S MY MONEY?: The Energy Department's inspector general released a report today concluding the agency's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability outspent its congressional allotment by more than \$16 million before correcting the mistake. But it stopped short of substantiating allegations that the Office of the Chief Financial Officer "willfully attempted" to cover up the violation, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports. Chief Financial Officer John Vonglis responded to the [report](#) by expressing qualms with how the inspector general conducted the investigation: "We also are concerned with erroneous IG characterizations, assumptions and conclusions throughout the report," Vonglis wrote. Read more from Anthony [here](#).

SWAMP WATCH: A pair of registrations caught our eye today. Ballard Partners, the firm founded by candidate Trump's Florida finance director and [close confidant](#), registered to [lobby](#) for Houston's Eagle LNG Partners, a natural gas provider.

— In a separate [filing](#), Save our Sound hired Michael Goo of AJW Inc. to lobby on issues surrounding the preservation of Nantucket Sound. Astute readers will [remember](#) that the group's president, Audra Parker, registered to lobby under its other name, the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound, earlier this month. Save our Sound was instrumental in blocking the approval for Massachusetts' proposed Cape Wind project.

QUICK HITS:

- Clean energy sector swings Republican with U.S. campaign donations, [Reuters](#).
- The war on coal is making the world's top mine owners a lot richer, [Bloomberg](#).
- The new energy majors: wind and solar college degrees, [The Wall Street Journal](#).
- Why Scott Pruitt may be hanging onto his job — for now, [CBS](#).

WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

- White House's lead Russia lawyer Ty Cobb to [step down](#)
- Trump [litmus test](#) hits House GOP primaries
- Why [firing Mueller](#) won't end the Russia investigation

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Stories from POLITICO Pro

Political consultant helped plan Pruitt's Australia visit [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 05/02/2018 03:08 PM EDT

A political consultant helped to set up a planned trip to Australia for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, according to the [New York Times](#).

The consultant, Global Impact Inc. CEO Matthew C. Freedman, previously worked with President Donald Trump's campaign chairman Paul Manafort and was on the Trump transition team before he was removed for using an email associated with his firm to do government business, according to the Times. He is treasurer of the American Australian Council, a group that promotes American companies, including oil and gas giants Chevron and ConocoPhillips, in Australia.

The report, according to [public records](#) obtained by the Sierra Club in a lawsuit, follows news that Pruitt traveled to Morocco with planning help from [lobbyist](#) Richard Smotkin, who was subsequently hired by the Moroccan government. Pruitt was also closely involved with Leonard A. Leo, the head of the conservative Federalist Society, on a [trip to Italy](#).

Freedman coordinated with Smotkin and offered recommendations about who Pruitt should meet while in Australia, communicating with Pruitt's advance aide Millan Hupp. He also asked that his involvement not be disclosed, according to the Times' review of the public records.

EPA spent about [\\$45,000](#) sending staffers ahead of Pruitt to Australia but ultimately canceled the trip so when Hurricane Harvey devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast.

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PJM fuel security study worries wind, solar advocates [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 05/02/2018 12:04 PM EDT

PJM Interconnection's plan to study "fuel security" on its grid could box out wind and solar power and slow the growth of natural gas in the nation's largest power market, according to the grid operator and energy experts.

The regional transmission operator, which manages power for 13 Mid-Atlantic and Rust Belt states, announced this week it would stress test power sources that participate in its capacity market to see how they would fare if they lost access to fuel delivery. That effort is in line with

Energy Secretary Rick Perry's push to help the coal-fired and nuclear power plants he says are crucial for grid resilience, but it would likely stop short of measures he has proposed to keep them running.

Renewables advocates said clean energy sources are already being squeezed out of PJM's capacity market, which requires that plants be able to remain on standby to produce electricity when needed, a problem for solar and wind sources. And they say the new study would only bolster coal-fired and nuclear power plants that keep fuel supplies on site — which PJM CEO Andy Ott confirmed when he said Monday that renewable resources would be further discounted in the study, and that only "robust resources" would be counted.

Mike Bryson, PJM's vice president of operations, said it would be difficult for wind and solar to be considered "secure fuel" sources during periods when extreme weather or a grid disruptions knock out other generators.

"It's not the peak hours of the day, it's 24 hours a day," he said. "This is a critical time when there's a storm or a major disruption of resources ... it may be a challenge without getting creative and clustering together [renewable] resources to be able to get that — battery plus solar plus wind, or some other technology."

The study is also likely to show problems with natural gas generation, which depends on pipelines for fuel. PJM suggested that while some gas-fired plants might sit near multiple supply sources, many might need to add dual fuel technology so they can burn oil in a crisis, a common feature in New England, where gas supplies are constrained.

PJM's study will first define fuel security criteria, then look at how long a generator can operate if it loses access to its fuel source, and just how many of the grid's power plants in the capacity market need to be "fuel secure." The proposal's emphasis on fuel on site echos Perry's proposal last year to reward plants that had 90 days of fuel on hand, though that proposal was unanimously rejected by FERC.

PJM could find the share of generators that need to be fuel secure might be as high as 100 percent in some areas, Bryson said, though it's likely to be slightly lower, possibly around 90 percent.

Once fuel security is defined, Bryson says PJM may award fuel secure power plants — like coal and nuclear power — higher payments in the capacity auction.

When PJM held its most recent capacity auction to provide resources for 2020 and 2021, the amount of annual wind power in the PJM capacity market fell by 48 percent to 508 megawatts after rule changes PJM applied in 2015 were fully phased in for the first time. Solar participation in that market dropped by 63 percent. Demand-response programs, in which customers curtail usage during high-demand times, saw a 25 percent decline.

Mark Kresowik, a regional director for Sierra Club who closely tracks grid issues, said the study would create a game rigged against renewables.

"PJM's planned study would likely lead to increase costs to consumers for resources like coal and nuclear that they neither want nor need," he said. "If you threw a bunch of resources out of the capacity market, made it really gas heavy, then the conclusion would be coal and nuclear."

Other renewable energy advocates said the technology was changing fast, and PJM wasn't taking it into account.

"Any study that evaluates electricity reliability without accounting for the proliferation of renewables and solar plus storage will be obsolete before the ink is dry," said Dan Whitten, a spokesman for the Solar Energy Industries Association.

The renewables industry argues that they should be given more credit for being available during the kinds of cold weather events the resilience study is examining. Even when natural gas supplies have tightened because of demand for home heating during recent cold snaps, wind farms and solar power have been able to continue to generate electricity.

"Renewable sources have consistently outperformed the credit they are given during severe weather events," said Gil Jenkins, a spokesman for the American Council on Renewable Electricity. "We are concerned that renewables are already undervalued in PJM's capacity market ... Bottom line: if these resilience studies are done in a truly technology-neutral way, renewables will come out well."

The coal power industry, however, sees the study as a move in the right direction. American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity CEO Paul Bailey said PJM may lose another 10 percent of its coal capacity in the next three years.

"Hopefully this PJM analysis would lead PJM to the conclusion that the grid cannot tolerate all these retirements, but we don't know yet — or at least they don't know yet," he said.

DOE applauded PJM's move, but said it was still considering its own action to protect coal-fired plants. The agency is believed to be mulling authority under the Federal Power Act or the Defense Production Act to directly subsidize the plants.

"DOE is encouraged by PJM's announcement today of a grid resilience initiative to study fuel security vulnerabilities," DOE spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes said in a statement Monday. "We share PJM's concerns and urge FERC to take immediate action to stop the loss of fuel-secure capacity. At the same time, DOE continues to review all options within its authority to ensure a resilient and secure electric grid."

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Trump sets new biofuel meeting for next week [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 05/02/2018 12:57 PM EDT

President Donald Trump will hold a seventh meeting on the Renewable Fuel Standard next week, sources in the biofuel and refining industries tell POLITICO.

Trump will host Sens. [Chuck Grassley](#) (R-Iowa), [Joni Ernst](#) (R-Iowa), [Ted Cruz](#) (R-Texas), and [Pat Toomey](#) (R-Penn.) on Tuesday in what one biofuels source said will be Trump's final meeting on the topic.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Grassley and Ernst are likely to use the meeting to make sure that Trump follows through on his promise to allow year-round sales of 15 percent ethanol, while also pressing him to curb the use of the small refiners exemption.

Cruz and Toomey are still seeking changes in the Renewable Fuel Standard to dramatically lower the program's compliance costs, though biofuel credit prices have fallen precipitously as the refinery exemptions have become public. Cruz held a rally in Washington last week with refinery workers calling on Trump to make big changes.

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Perry to testify on DOE budget to House Science panel [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 05/02/2018 02:27 PM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry will testify on his department's budget proposal next week at the House Science, Space and Technology Committee.

The [hearing](#) will take place on Wednesday, May 9 at 9 a.m., the committee said.

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FERC's Powelson: Don't subsidize uneconomic power plants [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 05/02/2018 12:18 PM EDT

FERC Commissioner Rob Powelson slammed officials from the energy industry and the Energy Department for trying to sidestep energy markets to bail out coal and nuclear power plants at a

speech today.

"What [power markets are] not about is creating subsidies for non-economic resources that ratepayers are going to pay for," Powelson said at a conference organized by Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions. "These old inefficient power plants need to retire. You can't have a market when you're sending wrong price signals to people who need to enter and exit."

DOE is considering using the Defense Power Act or the Federal Power to keep as many as 85 coal and nuclear power plants operating in the PJM Interconnection.

PJM has opposed DOE's attempts at intervention, and Powelson agrees.

"PJM has strong reliability metrics," he said. "If you want to help people at DOE with that, we're happy to set that up."

He also took issue with criticism that gas-fired power plants can't provide "fuel security" the way coal and nuclear plants can, pointing out that some have been built at wellhead sites. And he dismissed efforts to associate coal power with national security, a common theme in Energy Secretary Rick Perry's speeches on grid reliability.

"We've gotten caught up in political rhetoric and we haven't looked at the way markets can address these issues," Powelson told reporters after the speech.

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Watchdog: DOE wrongly spent \$16M [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 05/02/2018 10:31 AM EDT

The Energy Department's inspector general concluded in [a report](#) released today that the agency spent \$16 million in funds from its Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability more than permitted by Congress before fixing and correcting the mistake.

However, the watchdog was "unable to substantiate" allegations DOE's Office of the Chief Financial Officer "willfully attempted" to cover up the violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act to prevent it from coming to the attention of oversight and ethics officials.

"We substantiated the allegation that the Department obligated more funds than were apportioned for the specific account reviewed," the report concludes.

Chief Financial Officer John Vonglis expressed deep concerns with how the inspector general conducted the investigation, noting the involvement of a criminal investigator early in the

process and significant disruption to other financial reporting activities within the agency.

"We also are concerned with erroneous IG characterizations, assumptions and conclusions throughout the report," Vonglis wrote. The IG stood by how it conducted the probe.

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The Most Powerful Lobbyist in Trump's Washington [Back](#)

By Theodoric Meyer | 04/02/2018 05:02 AM EDT

When Brian Ballard signed the lease last year for an office on the second floor of the Homer Building, a downtown Washington edifice that's home to a number of lobbying firms, he promised himself he would stay in the space for five years. He lasted one. In February, his firm, Ballard Partners, moved into a bigger office on the fourth floor to accommodate the new lobbyists Ballard has hired since the election of one of his former clients, President Donald Trump.

At the firm's first staff meeting in the new offices, Ballard and five of his Washington lobbyists sat in new leather chairs around a small conference table, with Ballard at the head. Robert Wexler, a former Democratic congressman from Florida whom Ballard hired last year, phoned in from Paris with an update on the firm's work for the Turkish government. Jamie Rubin, a former assistant secretary of state in the Clinton administration, called from Brussels and updated Ballard on a meeting he'd had with Moise Katumbi, an exiled opposition leader from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who's a client.

"You'll be happy to hear that we signed the Maldives today," Syl Lukis, another Ballard lobbyist, told Rubin.

"Let's fire away quickly on Kosovo and Turkey," Ballard said. (The government of Kosovo is another Ballard client.)

Other Ballard lobbyists gave updates on their meetings with Trump administration officials and other work on behalf of the dozens of clients they represent in Washington, including Amazon, Dish Network, Uber, Pernod Ricard (the makers of Jameson whiskey and Absolut vodka) and Trulieve (a Florida-based medical marijuana company). Rebecca Benn, a former congressional staffer Ballard hired last year, updated Ballard and another lobbyist, Susie Wiles, on a meeting she'd set up for a client. "They were very, very happy — thank you, Susie — for the meeting at the White House last week," Benn said. "It went very, very well."

Ballard is a veteran Florida lobbyist who's been in Washington for barely a year — the blink of an eye in an industry in which many of the top practitioners have spent decades inside the Beltway. But Ballard is closer to the president than perhaps any other lobbyist in town. He's

parlayed that relationship into a booming business helping clients get their way with the Trump administration — and his clients and even some of his rivals say his firm has a better grasp of what's going on in the West Wing than almost anyone else on K Street. Ballard was one of the top fundraisers in the country for Trump's campaign and continues to raise millions for his reelection campaign. Wiles, one of his top lieutenants, ran Trump's campaign in Florida and delivered the nation's biggest swing state to the president.

Ballard's relationship with Trump has helped him solve a lucrative puzzle that has frustrated more established players. For all of the president's "drain the swamp" rhetoric, the new administration has given corporate America and its lobbyists the opportunity to revive dreams of tax cuts, regulatory rollbacks and rule changes that were mothballed during the Obama administration. But Trump also presents a challenge for the influence business — a White House in which key positions at least initially were as likely to be staffed by Trump loyalists as by old Washington hands with ties to K Street. Ballard has helped to bridge the gap. He's a Trump-friendly out-of-towner who can connect with the establishment — he is a close ally of Senator Marco Rubio as well as Charlie Crist, the former centrist Republican governor of Florida who is now a Democratic congressman — and make corporate clients comfortable.

Ballard isn't the only person in Trump's orbit who decided to try his or her luck in Washington. Campaign veterans from Corey Lewandowski, Trump's fired-but-never-forgotten campaign manager, on down have flocked to "the swamp" to lobby the administration — or, in Lewandowski's case, to offer clients a glimpse into Trump's thought process without actually registering to lobby. But Ballard appears to have landed the biggest fish. He has signed more than 60 clients since setting up shop in Washington after Trump's inauguration, including blue-chip companies like American Airlines and Sprint. Those clients paid Ballard nearly \$10 million last year for help navigating Trump's first year in office. (Those numbers don't include the \$3.1 million the firm says it brought in representing foreign clients such as Turkey and the Dominican Republic.)

"He's the only guy that's done it," said Robert Stryk, a lobbyist who runs in the same circles as some former Trump campaign hands and moved to Washington himself after the election. (Stryk's company, SPG, bills itself as a "private diplomacy" firm rather than a traditional lobbying shop.)

Lobbyists at some of Washington's established firms are quick to praise Ballard, but they also wonder how long his success can last, given the unique nature of the Trump administration. There are risks to building a shop around one principal's relationships. The now-defunct firms of Ed Gillespie, who was one of Washington's most powerful lobbyists during George W. Bush's administration, or Tony Podesta, who thrived under Barack Obama, might be regarded as cautionary tales. "Brian is building a strong Washington office, but the question is what happens when the circus leaves town," one Republican lobbyist with close ties of his own to the administration told me.

Unlike Lewandowski, who hasn't been able to resist boasting about his relationship with Trump as he hustles for clients, Ballard has taken pains to avoid the appearance of cashing in on his relationship with the president. He refuses to speak on the record about how often he talks with

the president. But his clients say he's been able to figure out how the Trump administration works in a way no one else has. For now, at least, it's working for him.

Trump called Ballard in the days before he announced he would run for president. The two men have known each other for nearly 30 years. Ballard met Trump after picking up a copy of *The Art of the Deal* in the 1980s. He read the book and was so struck by it that he wrote Trump a letter telling him how much he'd enjoyed it. "I loved the idea of 15-minute meetings," Ballard told me years later. "That's one of the things in the book that still stands out to me." He later told the *Orlando Sentinel* that he didn't believe in meetings that lasted any longer. Trump wrote "this beautiful letter" back, Ballard says, and they kept in touch.

Ballard ended up working on and off as Trump's Florida lobbyist, helping the Trump Organization negotiate state and local government when issues came up with Trump's Doral golf club. A decade before Trump announced his presidential run, Ballard helped orchestrate a fundraiser in 2005 at Trump Tower in Manhattan for Crist's campaign for Florida governor. "A friend told me about his record," Trump told the *St. Petersburg Times* at the time, referring to Crist. "I checked him out. I met him, I liked him, and I said I could help."

Ballard, like most of Florida's Republican establishment, backed Jeb Bush in the primary, but when Trump called he offered to do what he could for his client. In September, as it became clear that Trump's lead in the polls wasn't going away, Ballard dispatched Wiles to New York to meet with Trump. Wiles was named the Trump campaign's Florida co-chairwoman a few weeks later.

It took months for Ballard himself to come around to Trump. He jumped ship first to Rubio's campaign and signed on with Trump only once it was clear he would be the Republican nominee. But once he was in, Ballard proved a valuable asset. Florida is home to lots of wealthy Republican donors, and Ballard knew most of them after raising money for John McCain and Mitt Romney's presidential campaigns. Trump named Ballard his Florida finance chairman, and Ballard raised millions for his campaign. He spoke with Trump often and traveled on the campaign plane with him. The effort also put him in close touch with Reince Priebus, the Republican National Committee chairman who would be tapped as White House chief of staff, and Steven Mnuchin, the campaign's finance chairman, who's now treasury secretary. Trump spent more time in Florida in the general election than in any other state. And "whenever we did an event in Florida I was there," Ballard said.

Ballard watched the election returns come in with Lukis at an apartment he keeps in Manhattan. They didn't know whether Trump would win — although Wiles later said she was confident he would pull it off — but they hoped he'd at least carry Florida. When it became clear Trump would become president, they high-fived and walked over to the victory party. The calls from clients started the next day. "To say they were freaking out is absolutely maybe even an understatement," Wiles said.

Some Trump campaign hands almost immediately began trying to figure out whether they would

be working in the new administration or lobbying it. Ballard, who was raising money for the inaugural committee, moved more slowly, waiting to open his Washington office until after the inauguration. (His firm began representing a half dozen federal clients before Trump took office, according to disclosure filings, but Ballard says he didn't do any lobbying until later). Within three months of the inauguration, though, Ballard had signed two dozen clients, not just Amazon and American Airlines, but also Prudential and the GEO Group, a private prison operator.

Many early clients were companies Ballard already represented in Florida. Those clients beget more clients. "We started representing Dish [Network]," Ballard said. "They referred us to MGM, who referred us to H&R Block, who's referring us to another client right now." Signing high-profile corporate clients helped Ballard lobbyists get meetings with Trump administration officials, which helped him snag more clients. No one screened Ballard's calls during his first months in Washington, so he ended up turning away some "squirrely" would-be clients himself: people who wanted to lobby the State Department to buy their patents, bitcoin speculators, people with "some really weird gold issues." "If it's anyone who says I want to pay you to set up a meeting with the president or whatever, we just say no out of hand," Ballard said. "We end that conversation. We don't do that stuff."

Ballard isn't the only Washington lobbyist who has a personal relationship with Trump. Dave Urban, a veteran lobbyist who helped Trump carry Pennsylvania, is also widely believed to be close to the president. But Ballard's clients say many other Republican lobbyists in town haven't figured out how to negotiate the Trump administration more than a year into his presidency.

"I'll be very honest about this: I still don't feel this town has caught up," Richard Haselwood, a lobbyist for one of Ballard's clients, the tobacco giant Reynolds American, said one night in February as he sipped a martini. Ballard, Wiles and I, along with a couple of other Ballard lobbyists, had met Haselwood for drinks at Mastro's, a steakhouse across the street from Ballard's Washington office (and three blocks east of the White House) that's become enough of a haunt for Ballard lobbyists that they've started to learn the names of the waitresses.

Congressman Matt Gaetz dropped by the table, cocktail in hand. Gaetz, a baby-faced freshman from Florida, is closer to Trump than most House Republicans. He's flown on Air Force One and is a frequent presence defending Trump on Fox News, CNN and MSNBC, which has gotten the president's attention. Gaetz has bragged that Trump sometimes calls him when he gets off the air. But even Gaetz sometimes needs help from Ballard lobbyists to get what he wants from the West Wing. "Even as a friend of the president who speaks frequently with the president, sometimes I have to call Susie Wiles to get my way," he said.

Haselwood was one of a number of lobbyists for Ballard's Florida clients who urged him in the weeks after the election to consider setting up shop in Washington. Reynolds American, like other big companies, was struggling to figure out how to negotiate what would soon be Trump's Washington. Haselwood recalled Ballard being mobbed at the Republican Governors Association meeting in Orlando the week after the election. "Everyone is down there," he said. "No one knew what was going on. Brian came in and people were, like, rushing to him."

Ballard has helped clients like Reynolds map out who's really calling the shots in Trump's

administration, where aides and even Cabinet members can be influential one week and out of favor the next. "Brian jumped in and jumped in big, and I'm thrilled," Haselwood added. "I'd feel naked without him."

Ballard spent nearly two decades figuring out how to dine and golf with Florida's governors without abusing his relationships with them. He told the *St. Petersburg Times* a decade ago that he avoided lobbying Crist unless the governor's staffers were present. "I don't sneak it in while we're shooting the breeze," Ballard told the paper. "It doesn't work that way. It would be gross."

He grew up in Delray Beach, Florida, one of six children raised by a single mother. He got his start in politics at 24, when he took time off from law school to work as a travel aide and driver to Tampa Mayor Bob Martinez, a Republican waging a long-shot campaign for governor. When Martinez won, Ballard moved to Tallahassee to work for him and traded in his 1980 Toyota Tercel for a silver BMW. By the time [the Orlando Sentinel profiled him](#) in 1990, Ballard was the governor's chief of staff and had just married Kathryn Smith, the daughter of Florida Secretary of State Jim Smith, in what another newspaper called "Tallahassee's wedding of the year." (George Steinbrenner, a future Ballard client, was a guest.) The Sentinel profile recounted Ballard yukking it up on the phone with Jeb Bush — who was chairman of Martinez's reelection campaign — and described him as the "brat-savant of Florida politics."

Martinez lost reelection in 1990 to Lawton Chiles, a Democrat, and Ballard stuck around Tallahassee as a lobbyist. It wasn't an easy time to start out as a Republican lobbyist: Democrats held majorities in both chambers of the Florida Legislature and the governorship. But Republicans won control of the Florida Senate in 1994 and took the House two years later. And in 1998, Ballard's old pal Jeb Bush was elected governor.

A few weeks after the election, the *Ledger* of Lakeland, Florida, reported that Ballard's firm — called Smith, Ballard, Bradshaw and Logan at the time — had something other Tallahassee lobbying firms "only wish they could claim: an undeniably special relationship with Bush that is being cautiously defended." Ballard brashly told the paper his firm had no more access to Bush than anyone else. "Anyone who thinks that when they are hiring us they have secured some special niche in the administration is wrong and should save their money," Ballard said. "Don't hire us. Go somewhere else."

Despite his protestations at the time, Ballard proved remarkably successful over the next two decades at cultivating friendships with Florida's Republican governors. He was an early supporter of Crist's successful campaign to succeed Bush. When Rick Scott, a former hospital executive, beat the candidate Ballard was backing in the Republican primary to replace Crist, Ballard hustled to win him over, raising enough money for Scott's general-election campaign that Scott named him chairman of his inaugural committee after he won. Ballard also hired the woman who'd managed Scott's dark-horse campaign: Wiles, who would help Trump win Florida six years later. Mac Stipanovich, a longtime Republican lobbyist in Florida who hired Ballard to work on the Martinez campaign three decades ago, said Ballard has had "private, mansion-dinner relationships with every governor of Florida since" Bush. (The two men remain friends even

though Stipanovich claims to "hate Trump worse than a snake.")

Ballard is 56, with a tanned face and slightly sandy brown hair. He splits his time between Tallahassee, New York and Washington these days, but he retains something of a Florida air about him. When I met him at his office one morning in January, he wore a blue suit, a bright white shirt open at the collar and loafers. Lobbyists who know Ballard in Florida say he can be intensely competitive, but in person he's warm and laughs easily. Unlike many other Washington lobbyists, he doesn't seem like he's trying to ingratiate himself with you.

"I think the fastest way to get shut out is to start talking about who you can influence and who you can't influence," Lukis, a Ballard managing partner who moved to Washington after the election to open the new office, said over breakfast one morning at the Old Ebbitt Grill. "I don't even like the word 'influence.' I'm not trying to influence anybody. What I'm trying to do is to have input into the ultimate decision-making process that's being made regarding the issue that we're working on. And I'd just as soon talk to a staffer than I would the secretary, because I think ultimately if you can get the staff to agree with you, 98 percent of the time you're probably going to get the secretary to agree with you."

If Ballard hadn't helped to elect Trump, it's easy to imagine he might be one of the many Republican lobbyists in Washington who aren't enamored of the president. He's raised money and professed admiration over the years for several Republicans who have been harsh Trump critics: Jeb Bush, John McCain, Mitt Romney. He's occasionally even given to Democrats, including his old friend Crist, who became an independent during his failed Senate campaign in 2010 and is now a Democratic congressman. "Brian is a fairly moderate Republican, I think I would say," Crist said when I asked him what it was like to be on the other of the partisan divide from Ballard. "So it's fine." He laughed.

Ballard has taken criticism from Republicans who would have rather seen Hillary Clinton elected than Trump. It's cost him friendships. After the "Access Hollywood" tape came out late in the campaign, he said, "I can recall a very active Republican that I was trying to get to help at an event after that asking me if I was ashamed of myself." No, not at all, he replied. "No one's going to be fooled by electing Donald Trump," he told me. "He is what he is."

If he didn't know Trump, he might have ended up as a Trump critic rather than a supporter, he told me. "But I know him," he said.

Ballard's relationship with Trump isn't all that different from the bonds that hundreds if not thousands of lobbyists in Washington have with members of Congress they used to work for. Like Ballard, many lobbyists help sustain those relationships by giving money and hosting fundraisers for their old bosses' reelection campaigns. The difference is that Ballard's relationship is with the president of United States. Lobbyists and former campaign big shots such as Lewandowski had it particularly easy in the first months of the administration, before John Kelly replaced Priebus as chief of staff and cracked down on outside access to Trump. "You were walking in, you were having dinner," said a lobbyist for one of Ballard's clients, who estimated Ballard talks with Trump every few weeks. "It was like dealing with a Senate office or a small-time governor."

Ballard won't talk about what he does for his clients, for the most part. He made an exception for his work on behalf of Katumbi, the exiled Congolese opposition leader. Katumbi, who fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2016 to avoid being thrown in prison by President Joseph Kabila, hired Ballard to help persuade the Trump administration to pressure Kabila to allow him to return. Ballard, Lukis and Katumbi met with a deputy to Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, in October before Haley traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Haley forcefully called for the country to hold elections this year on her trip.

Not all of Ballard's foreign clients are as sympathetic. Ballard signed a contract with the Turkish government worth \$125,000 a month on May 11, days before Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's security guards beat up peaceful protesters outside Turkey's embassy, according to a Justice Department filing. Another filing shows Ballard met several times with administration officials on Turkey's behalf, including Sean Cairncross, a senior adviser to the White House chief of staff, and Matt Mowers, a State Department official who worked on Trump's campaign.

Domestic lobbying filings don't require the same level of disclosure, and Ballard's are especially lacking in detail. But they give a sense of the scope of his lobbying efforts. Ballard Partners has lobbied nearly two dozen federal agencies, from the Treasury Department to the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the White House, Vice President Mike Pence's office and Congress. Ballard and his partners pulled in \$550,000 last year lobbying the White House and the Justice Department for the GEO Group, the private-prison operator, which won the administration's first immigrant-detention contract in April, less than three months after signing Ballard. He lobbied the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on behalf of LG, the South Korean electronics manufacturer, and two solar-panel installation companies as the administration considered whether to slap tariffs on imported washing machines and solar panels. And he started lobbying the White House for Crowley Maritime, a Florida shipping company, four days after the administration waived the Jones Act in an effort to speed the delivery of hurricane relief to Puerto Rico. Thomas Crowley, the company's chief executive, told the Washington Post at the time that waiving the Jones Act — which requires shipments between U.S. ports to be carried on American-flagged vessels — wouldn't help relief efforts. The Jones Act, Crowley added, "is very important to our company and America's shipping industry." Trump allowed the waiver to lapse days later.

The staff at Ballard Partners remains small, at least compared with how much money Ballard is pulling in. The firm had just six registered lobbyists handling domestic work in the fourth quarter of 2017, when it took in \$3.6 million. That made it the No. 17 firm in Washington, ahead of many long-established firms, according to a POLITICO analysis of lobbying disclosure filings. Peck Madigan Jones, the No. 16 lobbying firm by revenue, had twice that many lobbyists.

Ballard insists he wants to build a firm that will outlast Trump, but some lobbyists are skeptical that he'll succeed. If Trump leaves before his term is finished or fails to win reelection, "I would imagine there would be significant drop-off" in Ballard's business, a prominent Democratic lobbyist said. "Because it's a straight Trump play."

Still, Ballard wouldn't be the first state-level lobbyist to make a permanent leap to Washington. The Denver law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, for instance, opened a Washington office in 1995 and is now the No. 2 lobbying shop in town by revenue. Norm Brownstein, the chairman of the firm's board, told me he admires what Ballard has achieved so far, before adding, "I believe as long as [Trump] is president, he will have a great practice."

Ballard's fundraising prowess means he'll remain valuable to Trump at least through 2020, the lobbyist for one of Ballard's clients told me. Washington lobbyists, of course, have hosted fundraisers and given money as a way of ingratiating themselves with lawmakers for decades. But relatively few lobbyists are raising serious money for Trump, whom many Republicans on K Street freely disparage in private. Ballard is one of only three lobbyists who's a vice chairman of the Republican National Committee's fundraising committee. "He's a ferocious fundraiser. I mean, if that coffee cup could give money," Wiles told me over coffee one morning, gesturing toward a mug on the table.

Stipanovich, Ballard's old friend in Florida, said he was willing to make a prediction: Ballard, unlike other Trump campaign veterans who have come to Washington, will be in business long after Trump is out of office. "When Trump is gone, Lewandowski might as well buy a bed-and-breakfast in Vermont," Stipanovich said. "But not Brian."

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Trump hires Clinton impeachment lawyer Emmet Flood [Back](#)

By Darren Samuelsohn | 05/02/2018 12:55 PM EDT

President Donald Trump has hired Emmet Flood, an attorney who helped President Bill Clinton manage his impeachment defense, to join his legal team, part of a more aggressive shift in tone in the president's legal strategy as special counsel Robert Mueller's probe widens.

Flood will replace Ty Cobb, the top Trump White House attorney who had been handling the Russia investigation.

"Emmet Flood will be joining the White House Staff to represent the President and the administration against the Russia witch hunt," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement Wednesday. "Ty Cobb, a friend of the President, who has done a terrific job, will be retiring at the end of the month."

Sanders also said that Cobb, the prominent white-collar attorney who left private practice last year for a job in Trump's inner circle, had been discussing his retirement for several weeks with White House chief of staff John Kelly.

Cobb has been an outspoken advocate on Trump's legal team for cooperation with Mueller's probe and a steadying voice since his arrival last summer in urging the president against tweeting about the Russia investigation.

He also helped coordinate the White House's document production effort and lined up more than two dozen interviews between Mueller and current and former Trump White House aides.

But his departure had also been expected as the president takes a more confrontational approach with the Mueller investigators, who, since last May, have been examining everything from whether Trump or his allies colluded with Russians to win the 2016 presidential election to whether the president obstructed justice in an attempt to shutter the probe. Former FBI Director James Comey, who Trump fired, previously said the president asked him to let go of an investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Trump's current team of personal lawyers, led by former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, last month restarted talks with Mueller over a potential sit-down interview, though the president and his attorneys have signaled they will resist the special counsel's overtures and may even force a subpoena fight that could take months as it winds its way through the courts.

Cobb, who hasn't been a direct player in the negotiations with Mueller on the Trump interview, has withstood months of criticism from conservatives and longtime Trump allies who had been urging the president to fire the top White House lawyer and launch more direct attacks on the special counsel.

Trump resisted those pleas until March, when he fired off the first in a series of tweets to mention the special counsel by name and also question whether the probe should have ever been launched. Those missives prompted widespread speculation Trump was on the verge of setting in motion Mueller's firing — which Cobb eventually walked back in an official White House statement saying no such plan was in the works.

Cobb had managed upon joining Trump's legal team last July to temper the president's furor against Mueller, tamping down the expectation Trump would get rid of the special counsel. Alongside Kelly, Cobb also was able to limit the president's Twitter attacks against Mueller.

"I have a very respectful and professional relationship with Bob Mueller. I think very highly of him," Cobb said in a July 2017 interview just before his first day on the job.

But Cobb was too optimistic about the Russia probe. He initially told reporters he anticipated Mueller would be done interviewing Trump administration staffers around the end of November 2017, when he said he thought the special counsel would issue a formal statement clearing the president of any wrongdoing.

Trump, who maintained constant contact with Cobb and a rotating cast of personal attorneys including Jay Sekulow, John Dowd and, more recently, Giuliani, had welcomed Cobb's timetable and shared it with friends, including during his Thanksgiving 2017 visit, according to people who spoke with him there.

When the probe did not end on Cobb's schedule, he repeatedly adjusted his timetable, but Trump's associates questioned his advice to the president. Breitbart repeatedly attacked Cobb, and the conservative website's former leader, Steve Bannon, made public and private pleadings urging the president to fire the White House lawyer.

Cobb's push for cooperation came at the same time Mueller was making moves on former Trump associates.

In late October, he indicted former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates on a dozen charges, including money laundering and tax evasion. He also struck a plea deal with George Papadopoulos, after the former campaign aide was caught lying to the FBI, and a separate plea deal with Flynn, who was also accused of lying to the FBI over his contacts with Russian officials. While Manafort continues to plead not guilty, Gates in February shifted strategies and pleaded guilty.

Cobb's job description in the White House was to work on Russia matters, giving the president's press staff the freedom to punt to him on all questions about the investigations. That marked a shift from Trump's initial legal approach, which had centered around White House counsel Don McGahn and longtime personal attorney Marc Kasowitz.

Working out of a windowless West Wing office down the hall from the Situation Room and White House mess hall, Cobb reviewed a vast database of internal documents related to the Russia probe that were turned over to Mueller. He had a staff of five by the fall of 2017, including Steven Groves, who left his post last August as chief of staff to U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley.

Cobb brought to the Trump team experience from both sides of multiple previous Washington special counsel probes. He was a top investigator examining corruption allegations against Samuel Pierce, Ronald Reagan's Housing and Urban Development secretary, and represented a lawyer swept up in the Iran-Contra investigations. During the Clinton administration, he represented clients involved in Kenneth Starr's Whitewater probe.

Some Trump allies urged the president to rely on his lawyer's expertise. "Take a deep breath, follow Ty Cobb's lead, trust the process," former Trump legal spokesman Mark Corallo told POLITICO in early December.

"Ty Cobb has an outstanding reputation, with the exception of talking too freely in restaurants," added Solomon Wisenberg, a former deputy on Starr's independent counsel investigation. He was referring to an incident in which Cobb and Dowd, sitting within earshot of a New York Times reporter at a nearby table at a Washington restaurant, discussed how much cooperation the president should give Mueller.

Others wanted a new approach. Before his falling out with the president, Bannon had urged the president in private to take a more aggressive stance against Mueller by targeting the special counsel's budget or overhauling his legal team.

Sam Nunberg, a former Trump campaign aide, told POLITICO last winter that Cobb had given the president unrealistic expectations about the timing and shape of the investigation. He predicted Trump would fire Cobb once that recognition set in.

"I don't imagine Cobb is long for 2018 in the White House," Nunberg said.

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Trump litmus test hits House GOP primaries [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider | 05/02/2018 05:03 AM EDT

For years, opposing President Barack Obama was among the top issues in Republican primaries. Now, the contests hinge on supporting — or opposing — President Donald Trump.

In California, a Republican opponent of Rep. Dana Rohrabacher is calling him a "hypocrite" on supporting Trump, as a super PAC runs digital ads using an old [tape](#) of Rohrabacher calling Trump "a mean nasty SOB." A Texas Republican in a runoff for an open, GOP-heavy seat is citing his opponent's old Facebook posts criticizing Trump. And in Indiana, Republican front-runner Mike Braun has given Rep. Todd Rokita a Trump-style nickname, "Todd the Fraud," for running as a Trump supporter after previously criticizing the president.

Hundreds of Republican primaries are just ahead on the 2018 calendar, and after watching Trump play a huge role in special primaries last year, GOP candidates have seen the power of dredging up an opponent's old comments opposing the president before he was the party standard bearer. It proved disastrous for GOP Rep. Mo Brooks' Senate campaign in Alabama, where super PACs like Senate Leadership Fund hammered his past statements on Trump and forced him into a third-place finish. And other candidates think it could be a poison pill for their opponents, too.

"No other person, group or issue has the gravitational pull on Republican primary voters that Donald Trump commands," Senate Leadership Fund president Steven Law wrote in a September 2017 memo, after the Alabama primary. "Republican voters are becoming more attached to Trump than they are to the party," Law continued, citing an NBC News poll that found 58 percent of Republicans consider themselves Trump supporters to 38 percent who see themselves as GOP party supporters.

In California, Rohrabacher and GOP opponent Scott Baugh are trading shots over which one is the "Never Trumper." Rohrabacher's campaign sent mailers to primary voters that accused Baugh of being "supported by 'Never Trumpers.'"

Baugh called that "hypocritical," pointing to a recent City News Service story, which [reported](#) that Rohrabacher had been caught on tape at a March 2016 fundraiser, weighing in on the

presidential primary: "I thought I was going to support Donald Trump, but I can't support a man who is a mean, nasty SOB."

An anti-Rohrabacher super PAC, New OC Future, has also picked up on the tape, turning it into a digital ad.

Rohrabacher spokesman Greg Blair said in a statement that the super PAC's existence was evidence "that Baugh is the candidate of special interests, Never Trumpers, and the pro-amnesty lobby."

Meanwhile, in Texas, a super PAC called Conservative Results Matter is going after Republican Dan Crenshaw, calling him an "anti-Trump liberal," in the two-way GOP runoff to replace retiring Texas Rep. Ted Poe.

"'Insane, hateful, idiot.' These are the words so-called Republican Dan Crenshaw used to describe President Trump," the narrator says in a new TV ad from the super PAC. "Crenshaw called Trump an 'idiot.'"

The attack mirrors a Facebook post by Crenshaw's runoff opponent, state Rep. Kevin Roberts, which cites an old Facebook post of Crenshaw's and says Crenshaw "openly [attacked] Donald Trump as an 'idiot,' 'insane,' and 'ignorant.'"

Crenshaw, in response to the ad, called it a "a desperate strategy," adding that the comments cited were "taken out of context." Crenshaw said he posted an "aggressive defense of Christianity" on Facebook in 2015, after Trump made comments about a religious litmus test.

"I've always supported President Trump," Crenshaw said. "I didn't always support candidate Trump."

All three candidates running for Senate in Indiana want to claim Trump as their own. But Braun went after Rokita — who donned a "Make America Great Again" hat in his TV ads — as "Todd the Fraud" on Trump

"'Todd the Fraud' says he supports the president, but he attacked President Trump and called him 'vulgar,'" says the narrator of Braun's ad. "And get this, President Trump's campaign reprimanded 'Todd the Fraud' for lying. Wow."

A Republican strategist, granted anonymity to speak candidly about the delicate business of aligning candidates' current and past views on Trump, advised candidates to give "a credible explanation for their past criticism," as they "will do better in elections than people who pretend to have election year conversions."

"Changing your tune on something like that, when there's demonstrable evidence to the contrary, makes you seem more like a politician who will do anything to get elected," the Republican strategist said.

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Why firing Mueller won't end the Russia investigation [Back](#)

By Darren Samuelsohn | 05/02/2018 05:01 AM EDT

President Donald Trump might be able to get rid of special counsel Robert Mueller — but he can't kill off the Russia probe.

Trump aides and associates have long warned him that ousting Mueller would have messy political consequences. But it's also unlikely to solve many of his legal worries. A [leaked](#) list of questions Mueller wants to ask Trump only underscores that, even if the special counsel is gone, his investigation — or offshoots of it — will live on.

Justice Department officials and FBI agents could simply pick up where a fired Mueller left off. State attorneys could bring their own charges against Trump and his associates. Even as a private citizen, Mueller might be able to publicize or share his findings with Congress.

"Bureaucracies are complicated animals, and this one has metastasized beyond the Mueller investigation," said Benjamin Wittes, a Brookings Institution senior fellow and editor in chief of the blog LawFare. "That's the thing that functionally protects the investigation."

When Mueller was appointed last May, he assumed control of an existing Justice Department probe into Russian election interference. Should Trump insist that Mueller be fired — many experts believe the direct order must be given by his Justice Department supervisor — the investigation would revert to federal officials with powers to question witnesses, issue subpoenas and seek criminal indictments.

"Those career people won't pack up their bags and go away," said Gene Rossi, a former federal prosecutor. "And if a certain president thinks Mueller is aggressive, the [Justice Department's] Public Integrity Division would not let this go."

Trump could always try to install new top Justice Department officials who might agree to rein in or end the Russia probe. He has reportedly mused about firing Mueller's supervisor, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who, Trump complains, has given the special counsel too much latitude. (Attorney General Jeff Sessions has recused himself from the Russia probe because of his contacts with Russia's ambassador in 2016.)

Even a more compliant successor to Rosenstein might not be able to wind down the Russia investigation — at least not without fierce resistance from an outraged law enforcement and national security bureaucracy.

That's the view of former FBI Director James Comey, whom Trump fired in May 2017, and who

said during a Monday appearance in Washington that ousting Mueller "would be utterly ineffective in practice" and ultimately "won't make a difference."

"[Y]ou'd have to fire the entire FBI and the entire Justice Department." Comey said.

Comey added that it would be "interesting to see what would happen next, because I could imagine U.S. attorney's offices picking up pieces of it, different FBI offices picking up pieces of it."

At least two U.S. attorneys have already played a key role in the case: The top federal prosecutor for the Southern District of New York executed last month's raid on longtime Trump personal attorney, Michael Cohen. And Dana Boente, then U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, issued subpoenas last year related to former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Trump also can't stop states from acting if they suspect state crimes like wire and mail fraud or money laundering. Most aggressive on this front is New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who started working last year with Mueller's team on its probe into Manafort and his financial transactions. Schneiderman has largely stepped back as Mueller prosecutes Manafort in federal courts. But sources familiar with the Empire State Democrat's work said he's tracking developments in the Russia case and could act as a backstop to Mueller.

Last month, Schneiderman called on lawmakers to change a New York statute which bars recipients of presidential pardons from prosecution for a similar state crime. That was widely seen as a response to concern that Trump might pardon aides like Manafort or Cohen — or even himself.

"It's a race against time," said Democratic state Sen. Todd Kaminsky, a former federal and state prosecutor. Kaminsky has introduced a bill to change the law, which faces an uphill battle in the GOP-controlled state Senate.

Spokespeople for the attorneys general of Delaware and Virginia, where Mueller's Manafort indictment alleges crimes took place, declined to comment on any action they might take in the event of pardons or Mueller's firing.

Mueller's probe has other potential stopgaps too. Whistleblower advocates Mark Zaid and John Tye say the special counsel should have a contingency plan to send his critical investigative work to Congress in the event he is fired.

History shows the need for swift action: After President Richard Nixon engineered the firing of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox in the infamous October 1973 "Saturday Night Massacre," FBI agents quickly sealed off Cox's office and the sensitive investigative files inside.

Mueller or someone on his team should be prepared to move fast to Capitol Hill with printed documents or encrypted hard drives, Zaid and Tye argued in a New York Times op-ed last week, warning that Trump could send federal marshals to arrest anyone carrying documents to

Congress.

"[I]f the evidence safely reached Congress, the president probably could not contain it," they wrote.

Constitutional protections would allow willing lawmakers to legally disclose even classified information on the House or Senate floor.

In an interview, Zaid stressed that such a response would be fully legal. "It's not [Edward] Snowden. It's not [Chelsea] Manning," he said.

A fired special counsel could also try to get his findings out by self-publishing them. The Justice Department would have authority to review Mueller's work and redact classified portions. But Zaid and Tye, co-founders of the nonprofit legal group Whistleblower Aid, argue Mueller would have First Amendment rights to sue if he wanted to question any redactions.

Mueller could also try to persuade a grand jury to return a sealed indictment against the president. Corey Brettschneider, a Brown University political science professor who wrote about this strategy in POLITICO Magazine, acknowledged the special counsel would first need to persuade his superiors to overrule two Justice Department opinions that say a sitting president can't face criminal charges while in office.

But if Mueller can clear that hurdle, he'd be well positioned to quietly get charges against Trump into the legal system "while avoiding the risk of provoking Trump to try to further impede the probe."

Most important, Brettschneider argued that the filed sealed indictment "would outlast" Mueller and could be dismissed only by a federal judge. In addition, he said, a sealed indictment would also ensure that the statute of limitations for crimes Trump might be charged with would not expire."

"This leaves open the possibility of Trump being tried in the future," he said.

Some legal experts scoff at such talk.

"What we're seeing is, 'Now let's see how far we can stretch the law to get Trump,'" said retired Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, who recently met with Trump and his staffers at the White House. "People are being very clever about it — but not very wise."

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From: Hewitt, James
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Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17
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I've replaced the Hill story with the updated version. Otherwise good to send?

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:34 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Here is the updated Flint one: <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:13 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
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From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The

Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according

to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was

spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA

policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the

Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to

support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dloughy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended

fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its

own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election,"

Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

'Behind the Scenes'

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 8/25/2017 10:53:35 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Chevron: COHN: 'I have come under enormous pressure both to resign and to remain in my current position' -- TEXAS HURRICANE could be Trump's first major natural disaster -- PLAYBOOK ON THE ROAD: KARL ROVE at Machu Picchu

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Chevron

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Friday morning. TWO THINGS we picked up on yesterday in our conversations. The Office of Management and Budget just sent up a list of provisions and programs that expire at the end of the year, which will help kick off crafting a short-term spending measure to avoid a shutdown. So, in other words, the White House isn't totally out of the game. But it's becoming clearer and clearer that the administration is itching for a shutdown fight over border wall funding. It's just not clear if they want that fight in September, December or both. ...

... AND KEEP AN EYE ON TEXAS -- Hurricane Harvey is expected to make landfall in Texas Friday night or early Saturday morning. The Houston Chronicle says it will hit the Lone Star State as a Category 3 storm, per the Weather Channel. <http://wxch.nl/2gbVlr3> Storms, as we know, often morph quickly into political issues, so look for Trump to get involved (Trump and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott have already spoken by phone). <http://bit.ly/2wtUXju>

-- AP's Michael Graczyk in Houston: "The hurricane with the potential for up to 3 feet of rain, 125 mph winds and 12-foot storm surges could be the fiercest such storm to hit the United States in almost a dozen years. Forecasters labeled Harvey a 'life-threatening storm' that posed a 'grave risk' as millions of people braced for a prolonged battering that could swamp dozens of counties more than 100 miles inland." <http://bit.ly/2vvByKI>

THIS COULD ALSO IMPACT THE GOVERNMENT-FUNDING DEBATE. Natural disasters typically force bipartisan cooperation.

GARY COHN SPEAKS TO THE FT -- A FEW INTERESTING NUGGETS YOU

SHOULD READ ...

-- THE WHITE HOUSE IS MOVING THE GOALPOSTS ON TAX REFORM ... AGAIN:

Cohn now says he believes tax reform will be done by the end of 2017. "They have been holding hearings [on tax] for years ... It's not like they are just starting the process now," Mr. Cohn said. "I do think it can pass both of the tax committees and both chambers in 2017." **KEEP IN MIND:** Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said tax reform would be done and signed into law by the August recess. Then Marc Short, Trump's top Hill liaison, said Trump would like a bill by Thanksgiving. This is another punt.

-- COHN SAYS TRUMP IS GOING TO LAUNCH A MAJOR PUSH TO PASS TAX REFORM.

The FT reports Trump is heading to Missouri to begin selling his tax-reform proposal. "Starting next week, the president's agenda and calendar is going to revolve around tax reform," Mr Cohn said in an interview. "He will start being on the road making major addresses justifying the reasoning for tax reform and why we need it in the U.S." **OK, SURE.** Trump was supposed to make August all about tax reform. Our colleague Colin Wilhelm pointed out yesterday that he hasn't done squat to advance a tax code rewrite this month (<http://politi.co/2xhVsel>). Trump has spent the month agitating against the GOP leaders he needs to get this done. **PLUS** he has a government shutdown and debt-ceiling debate to engage in. We don't doubt he'll do a few speeches. But aides tell us all the time that they doubt his commitment to the issue because of his reluctance to get in the game months ago. **ALSO:** Can he last an entire speech without dumping on a Republican leader or key senator? Stay tuned.

THE REALITY: Cohn is part of the group negotiating a tax-code rewrite. He has impressed longtime aides and lawmakers, has dined with lawmakers in and around leadership and is fully engaged in the talks. But he spent his career at Goldman Sachs, not in government, which might help explain why he thinks this will be so easy.

-- **A+ FOR AMBITION:** Boy, this is an ambitious timeline. Cohn says tax reform shouldn't be so hard because Congress has been holding hearings on it for years. Yes, but those hearings involve the 40 members on the Ways and Means Committee and the 26 members on the Senate Finance Committee. Eighty-eight percent of Congress has only thought about tax reform as an abstract exercise. **The FT story**
<http://on.ft.com/2w3B2aq>

COHN ON CHARLOTTESVILLE: FT: "Did you consider resigning after Charlottesville?"

COHN: "I have come under enormous pressure both to resign and to remain in my current position. As a patriotic American, I am reluctant to leave my post as director of the National Economic Council because I feel a duty to fulfil my commitment to work on behalf of the American people. But I also feel compelled to voice my distress over the events of the last two weeks. Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and the KKK. I believe this administration can and must do better in consistently and unequivocally condemning

these groups and do everything we can to heal the deep divisions that exist in our communities. As a Jewish American, I will not allow neo-Nazis ranting 'Jews will not replace us' to cause this Jew to leave his job. I feel deep empathy for all who have been targeted by these hate groups. We must all unite together against them." ***Transcript of the interview*** <http://on.ft.com/2vbKEkF>

NOT IT! -- "White House yielding to Congress on tax details," by Ben White: "The White House does not plan to release its own version of a tax reform plan and will instead leave that to the congressional leadership and the major tax-writing committees, a senior administration official said Thursday. The decision to hand off the specifics of tax reform comes after the administration promised earlier this summer to release a full tax plan when Congress returned from its August recess. It also follows President Donald Trump's repeated promises to deliver the biggest tax cut in American history.

"Our plan is to have a full-blown release of the plan in the beginning of September, with being able to vote and getting this passed before the end of the year,' Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told ABC's 'This Week' in July. Instead, the so-called Big Six tax reform negotiators -- a group that includes Mnuchin, National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch -- will essentially turn over what they have done to the committees and let them fill in the particulars.

"The move to turn over most of the detail work to Congress follows some progress from the Big Six to identify possible ways to pay for a cut in the corporate rate - to between 22 percent and 25 percent - including by capping the mortgage interest deduction, eliminating the deduction for state and local taxes, reducing the interest that companies can deduct and possibly taxing contributions to 401(k) retirement plans." <http://politi.co/2vc50Ku>

NYT's CARL HULSE -- "Trump Fences Himself In With Border Wall Spending Threat": "President Trump handed Democrats a gift this week with his vow to shut down the government if he doesn't soon get money for his border wall. Democrats may be only too happy to let him follow through on his threat since it will now be easy for them to blame the president for any government interruption, which would probably aggravate many Americans. Rather than cowering Democrats, Mr. Trump's tough talk is more likely to embolden the opposition in ongoing negotiations, particularly since he has now twice suggested he was willing to shutter government agencies if he didn't get his way.

"It also puts more pressure on Republicans to find the votes internally to pass spending bills and an increase in the federal debt limit - two things hard-right conservatives in the House and Senate have refused to support in the past. That Republican resistance provides Democrats leverage - Republicans can either grant concessions such as no wall money or produce all the votes for the spending bills and debt limit increase themselves." <http://nyti.ms/2vmggjk>

***** **A message from Chevron:** We're piloting a program that uses drones to keep an eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

SOMETHING TO WATCH -- "Ryan faces diciest stretch of his speakership," by Rachael Bade in Racine, Wisconsin: "For all its power and prestige, the speaker of the House is one of the most thankless jobs in Washington -- just ask John Boehner. Now, with Congress barreling toward major fiscal fights this fall, Paul Ryan is about to get a taste of the Boehner treatment -- and then some. Consider what's on the immediate horizon for the GOP wunderkind: President Donald Trump is ready to shut down the government over his border wall with Mexico. Breitbart has all but declared a renewed, Steve Bannon-led war on GOP leaders, with Ryan in its cross hairs. And conservative lawmakers are exhorting the speaker to play hardball on raising the debt ceiling -- even as the White House demands a no-strings-attached increase to calm nervous creditors.

"Conservatives aren't going to roll over when it comes to the debt ceiling,' said Republican Study Committee Chairman Mark Walker (R-N.C.) in a Tuesday interview. 'I can tell you: It's going to be a battle.' Asked about Ryan's leadership on such matters, Walker added: 'I would like to see his genius in policy manifest itself. ... Behind closed doors, there are strong conversations when it comes to holding the line for the will of the bulk of the conference. And I would like to see some strength in that area.'

"When Ryan reluctantly took the reins of the House Republican Conference in late 2015, he went out of his way to say he was only heeding the call of duty and didn't really want it. Two years later, he faces the most treacherous stretch of his speakership as September showdowns over the budget and debt ceiling approach. Like Boehner, Ryan will be forced to mediate the long-running hostilities in his conference - between the always-potent Freedom Caucus and a newly-empowered faction of centrists. Only this time, Ryan also has a demanding and unpredictable president thrown into the mix, too." <http://politi.co/2vIApGf>

FORMER SEN. JOHN DANFORTH (R-MO.) in the Washington Post: "Trump is exactly what Republicans are not": "Many have said that President Trump isn't a Republican. They are correct, but for a reason more fundamental than those usually given. Some focus on Trump's differences from mainstream GOP policies, but the party is broad enough to embrace different views, and Trump agrees with most Republicans on many issues. Others point to the insults he regularly directs at party members and leaders, but Trump is not the first to promote self above party. The fundamental reason Trump isn't a Republican is far bigger than words or policies. He stands in opposition to the founding principle of our party - that of a united country. ...

"In honor of our past and in belief in our future, for the sake of our party and our nation, we Republicans must disassociate ourselves from Trump by expressing our opposition to his divisive tactics and by clearly and strongly insisting that he does not represent what it means to be a Republican." <http://wapo.st/2ivfiiN>

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS! -- at 6:35 a.m.: "If Senate Republicans don't get rid of the Filibuster Rule and go to a 51% majority, few bills will be passed. 8 Dems control the Senate!" ... **at 6:40 a.m.:** "General John Kelly is doing a fantastic job as Chief of Staff. There is tremendous spirit and talent in the W.H. Don't believe the Fake News" ... **at 6:44 a.m.:** "Few, if any, Administrations have done more in just 7 months than the Trump A. Bills passed, regulations killed, border, military, ISIS, SC!"

-- FOR THE RECORD: Senate Republicans have had trouble getting to 51 votes on major legislation. It's not true that eight Democrats control the Senate -- not by a long stretch. And the Senate GOP leadership has already said they aren't changing the filibuster rule.

AXIOS' JONATHAN SWAN: "Trump seriously considering ending DACA":

"Sources familiar with the deliberations tell Axios that Trump has made no final decision, and the White House continues to receive advice from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice. Jeff Sessions strongly believes Trump should end DACA; DHS, however, has a more nuanced position, and Trump himself has said he's sympathetic to the children helped by the program." <http://bit.ly/2xhTlqM>

FWD.US PRESIDENT TODD SCHULTE'S DACA BRAIN DUMP -- "DACA could end (meaning renewals are blocked) by either a court order or the administration could stop issuing new permits and renewals at any moment. Despite the President keeping the program in place to date, at the end of June 10 Republican Attorneys General, led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, threatened to undermine the President by suing the administration if the President doesn't end DACA by September 5th.

"Because the removal of these protections would force hundreds of thousands out of their jobs and make them subject to immediate deportation, this is a unique immigration policy moment -- in terms of immediate impact and in terms of how it would be perceived. It is important to be frank -- the President has had multiple opportunities to end this program, and has to date clearly made a decision that he wants to keep this program going. This is absolutely the right policy -- and given the terrible consequences of a DACA repeal -- smart politics. Seven in eight Americans believe Dreamers deserve a place in this country -- this is as close to consensus as we get on anything.

"Picking a fight intentionally to start deporting Dreamers is a uniquely awful political position. This is why for years Republicans have said they want to find a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers. If DACA were repealed in September, by January of 2018 - and for the next 2 years -- between 5,000 and 10,000 Dreamers each and every week would lose the protections of the program. Not only would they be subject to immediate deportation, but hundreds of thousands would lose their jobs. The politics of repealing DACA without a fix would be uniquely painful for the administration and the President's party, who they rightly believe would be blamed."

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Interior secretary recommends Trump alter at least

three national monuments, including Bears Ears," by WaPo's Juliet Eilperin and Darryl Fears: "Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Thursday that President Trump alter at least three national monuments established by his immediate predecessors, including two in Utah, a move expected to reshape federal land and water protections and certain to trigger major legal fights. In a report Zinke submitted to the White House, the secretary recommended reducing the size of Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, as well as Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, according to multiple individuals briefed on the decision." <http://wapo.st/2waffMo>

TRUMP'S FRIDAY -- TRUMP meets with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at 11:30 a.m. and then goes to Camp David at 3 p.m.

JARED'S PEACEMAKING EXPEDITION UPDATE: HEADLINE of ISRAEL HAYOM, Sheldon Adelson's newspaper: "In Ramallah, they worry: Kushner didn't say two states."

-- **"As Trump's Peacemaker, Kushner Finds Common Ground, and Complications, in Middle East Trip,"** by NYT's Declan Walsh in London and Peter Baker in Washington: "In his first solo trip to the broader Middle East as President Trump's designated peacemaker, Jared Kushner has found both cause for optimism and reminders of just what a daunting task his father-in-law has given him. Over the course of two days, he met with leaders from several influential Arab countries and emerged encouraged by their stated eagerness to help him bring Israelis and Palestinians together. But his visit on Wednesday with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt showed how other issues can easily complicate the initiative as both sides sought to paper over a dispute over American aid. ... In their meetings with Mr. Kushner, Arab leaders signaled readiness to cooperate, forgoing the usual grievances against Israel and instead focusing on their common interests, according to officials from Jordan and the United Arab Emirates." <http://nyti.ms/2vv4oLa>

TOP-ED - DAVID IGNATIUS in WaPo, "Could this be a game-changer for Middle East peace?": "The Trump administration is exploring new approaches for easing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that build on talks with a budding Sunni Arab coalition of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Jordan. Jared Kushner, the White House senior adviser and presidential son-in-law, visited the leaders of all four countries during his Middle East trip this week. He was accompanied by special envoy Jason D. Greenblatt and deputy national security adviser Dina Powell. The group came away hopeful that the new generation of Arab leaders is a potential 'game-changer,' said a senior administration official. ... The Trump administration seems to envision an 'outside-in' strategy for breaking the Palestinian-Israeli stalemate. The United States, it's hoped, could eventually bring together Israelis and leaders of the major Arab states for a peace conference. Trump's unusually close relations with both Israel and the Gulf Arabs are part of this strategy." <http://wapo.st/2wM16Yq>

WHAT ONE TOP TRUMP SUPPORTER IS SAYING -- REP. CHRIS COLLINS (R-N.Y.): "Mr. Collins stated that 'no one in his right mind' would hold a town hall meeting at

this point, and he cited safety concerns as the reason with the Steve Scalise shooting as an example." <http://bit.ly/2wa1Nsc>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: CAITLIN MITCHELL** is joining the Democratic National Committee in the newly created chief mobilization officer role. She will be in charge of the new "mobilization department" and manage its digital, marketing and online fundraising departments. Mitchell previously worked as vice president of digital at EMILY's List.

-- **THE "NOT ONE PENNY"** campaign is launching a seven-figure cable ad buy pushing lawmakers to not make changes to the tax code that "provide additional tax giveaways to millionaires, billionaires, and wealthy corporations at the expense of working families." The ads in D.C. and on local cable are targeting GOP Reps. Rod Blum and David Young of Iowa, Martha McSally of Arizona, Kevin Yoder of Kansas, Bruce Poliquin of Maine, Will Hurd of Texas, Rick Crawford of Arkansas and Darrell Issa of California. **The national ad** <http://bit.ly/2xxzenU>

PLAYBOOK ON THE ROAD -- Karl Rove: "enjoying the midday Playbook read after finishing a second day on Machu Picchu" <http://politi.co/2gaxuO3> ... **Anne Brady Perron:** "Stopping to get my Playbook fix while hiking The Upper Narrows trail in Zion National Park." <http://politi.co/2vcrgUi> ... **Charmaine Yoest (@CharmaineYoest), HHS assistant secretary of public affairs:** "Never miss @playbookplus - even @theyoestdog keeps up at the beach. #PlaybookLoyal @apalmerdc" <http://politi.co/2wuocmw> ... **Poppy MacDonald (@PoppyMacD), president of POLITICO:** "Staying caught up w/ @playbookplus while @ #OregonCoast #haystackrock #PlaybookLoyal" <http://politi.co/2w3J1UH> ... **Daniel Roy, CEO of a software company in Utrecht, Netherlands:** "reading Playbook from the heart of the Axis of Evil: Isfahan in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Apparently you haven't antagonized the Ayatollah enough: I'm happy to report that you're freely available over here (unlike among others www.foxnews.com - no surprises there)." <http://politi.co/2vciHsN>

-- **OTHER READERS** sent in pix of themselves reading Playbook from the Scottish highlands; Mdina, Malta; near Bull Mountain, Montana; a palace in Milan; the Puget Sound; Punta Cana, La Altagracia in the Dominican Republic; fishing off Nantucket; the Solheim Golf Cup in Des Moines; Montauk, N.Y.; Cooperstown, N.Y.; Ayer's Rock in Australia's Northern Territory; Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C.; San Francisco; Mendoza, Argentina; in the shadow of the Matterhorn; outside the Colosseum in Rome; Cancún; Grand Teton National Park; Fort Ticonderoga; Cuba; Koh Samui, Thailand; and Manhattan. **LAST CHANCE** -- Send photos to Daniel daniel@politico.com, or tweet photos with #PlaybookLoyal for a chance to be featured next week in our last Playbook on the Road installment and be entered into a contest to win a signed Matt Wuerker cartoon. **See the whole gallery of entries this week** <http://politi.co/2gaxuO3>

Playbook Reads

[REDACTED]

PHOTO DU JOUR: White House senior adviser Jared Kushner meets with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Aug. 24 in Ramallah, West Bank. | Osama Falah/PPO via Getty Images

AT LANGLEY -- "At CIA, a watchful eye on Mike Pompeo, the president's ardent ally," by WaPo's Greg Miller: "As CIA director, Mike Pompeo has taken a special interest in an agency unit that is closely tied to the investigation into possible collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign, requiring the Counterintelligence Mission Center to report directly to him. Officials at the center have, in turn, kept a watchful eye on Pompeo, who has repeatedly played down Russia's interference in the 2016 election and demonstrated a willingness to engage in political skirmishes for President Trump. Current and former officials said that the arrangement has been a source of apprehension among the CIA's upper ranks and that they could not recall a time in the agency's history when a director faced a comparable conflict. ... 'People have to watch him,' said a U.S. official who, like others, requested anonymity to speak frankly. 'It's almost as if he can't resist the impulse to be political.'" <http://wapo.st/2vvgeVx>

HMM -- "Mnuchin viewed eclipse from roof of Fort Knox," by WaPo's Drew Harwell and Beth Reinhard: "It turns out that [Treasury Secretary Steven] Mnuchin did view the eclipse while he was in Kentucky, and from an extraordinary place: Just outside the path of totality, from the roof of the nation's fabled Fort Knox, atop nearly \$200 billion in American gold. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) posted a Facebook photo [<http://bit.ly/2gbGVwC>] of himself, holding a pair of eclipse glasses, and Mnuchin at the U.S. Bullion Repository, where he said 'we viewed the #solareclipse from the rooftop today.' But Treasury officials said Thursday that the trip was planned explicitly around 'official government travel,' rejecting the idea that the Fort Knox visit and the appearance at a luncheon for the local chamber of commerce were mere cover. They said the luncheon appearance had been planned for early August but was delayed when McConnell postponed the Senate's recess, an account confirmed by a spokeswoman for the Louisville chamber, Alison Brotzge-Elder." <http://wapo.st/2vmhlrg>

THE NEW ECONOMY -- "Amazon Plans to Lower Some Prices at Whole Foods," by NYT's Nick Wingfield in Seattle and David Gelles in New York: "The era of Whole Paycheck, the derisive nickname for Whole Foods, may be drawing to a close. Amazon, which takes control of the upscale grocer on Monday, intends to slash prices the same day.

"The significance of the move goes well beyond the price of organic avocados, baby kale and rotisserie chickens, all of which will cost less on Monday than on Sunday. Rather, it is an outsize way for Jeff Bezos, Amazon's chief executive, to announce his plan to shake up the grocery industry and take on competitors like Walmart and Kroger. ...

"Amazon plans to weave together its online business and physical stores by turning

its Prime membership program into a Whole Foods rewards program, providing additional savings to customers. Amazon Prime is a \$99-a-year service that gives customers faster free shipping, video streaming and other benefits. Whole Foods' private-label products will be available through Amazon's online services and Amazon lockers that will be installed in some Whole Foods markets. Customers will also be able to return online orders to Amazon through the lockers." <http://nyti.ms/2wDwljs>

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

MEDIAWATCH -- "Pro-Trump Media Bristles As John Kelly Limits What Gets To The President's Desk," by BuzzFeed's Adrian Carrasquillo and Charlie Warzel: "'I'm scared that the military complex is taking over the formerly populist White House,' said Lucian Wintrich, who writes for Gateway Pundit, one of the websites in the pro-Trump sphere, which has trafficked in conspiracies in the past. Longtime Trump adviser and occasional Infowars guest Roger Stone said Trump's 'news summaries have been sanitized, which means no Infowars, no Daily Caller, no Breitbart. As such, his views are shaped by CNN and FOX News. He watches network news as well, which is almost antiquated. That's why he's so mad about the Russia investigation.'" <http://bzfd.it/2vuMjg8>

-- **"AP names Asher to news editor position in Washington"** - AP: "The Associated Press on Thursday named award-winning journalist James Asher as a news editor in its Washington bureau, where he will oversee coverage of the investigations into interference in the 2016 election and other key elements of President Donald Trump's administration. ... Asher is the former Washington bureau chief for McClatchy. His work on the worldwide Panama Papers investigation with a team at McClatchy was awarded the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in journalism for explanatory reporting. McClatchy shared that award with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and The Miami Herald." <http://bit.ly/2wajaZF>

Playbookers

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY: ROY and KELLY SCHWARTZ celebrate 10 years today.

-- **National Journal Editor Stephen G. Smith** writes in that "Ingrid Goes West," co-written by his son David Branson Smith, opens in theaters across D.C. today. Smith won the top screenwriting award at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. **Washington Post review** <http://wapo.st/2vIKpzj> ... **Trailer** <http://bit.ly/2vcird9>

TRANSITIONS -- Willow Bay has been inducted as dean of USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and as the Walter H. Annenberg Chair in

Communication. ... Former Washington Post deputy national political editor **Rebecca Sinderbrand** has joined Yale University as a Block Visiting Lecturer where she will teach courses on journalism and politics.

SUNDAY SO FAR - NBC's "Meet the Press": Ohio Gov. John Kasich ... Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). Panel: Yamiche Alcindor, Michael Gerson, Danielle Pletka, Katy Tur

--**CBS' "Face the Nation"** (guest host: Major Garrett): Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) ... a foreign policy discussion with Tom Donilon and Ret. Navy Admiral James Winnefeld. Political panel: Amy Walter, Susan Page, Ben Domenech, Clarence Page.

--**ABC's "This Week":** Panel: Matthew Dowd, Roland Martin, Julie Pace, Jen Psaki, Chris Ruddy

--**"Fox News Sunday":** Panel: Karl Rove, Catherine Lucey, Josh Holmes, Juan Williams

--**CNN's "State of the Union":** Va. Gov. Terry McAuliffe. Panel: Mary Katharine Ham, Jennifer Granholm, Michael Caputo, Karine Jean-Pierre

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** (guest host: Nia-Malika Henderson): Margaret Talev, Jonathan Martin, Manu Raju, Jeff Zeleny

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: Steve Hilton, host of Fox News' "The Next Revolution with Steve Hilton" (Sundays at 9 p.m./ET) and author of "More Human -- Designing A World Where People Come First." **How he views the Trump presidency as going:** "His big mistake was to subcontract policy strategy to congressional Republicans. The fateful decision to attempt healthcare reform before progress on the core economic agenda was a disaster. So much that has gone wrong flows from that mistake. Time is running out to correct it." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xihk9h> ...

... **Sara Sendek**, associate VP at DDC Public Affairs and a Bush WH and RNC alum, "celebrating with my D.C. family: Scott Sendek, Tory Sendek and Conor Maguire with dinner at Rasika." **A fun fact about Sara:** "Before my political aspirations, I had a dream of competing in the Olympics for figure skating and trained competitively for several years before I reached retirement age in my late teens." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2vcijul>

BIRTHDAYS: Trumpworld's Michael Cohen ... Elsa Walsh ... Dan Stein is 26 ... Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal is 75 ... Jedd Rosche, CNN Politics Congress editor ... Tom Squitieri is 64 ... Daniel Barash ... Sarah Peck, Sen. Kaine's comms director and Hillary's former Virginia comms director (h/ts Ian Sams and Michaela Balderston) ... Leigh Claffey, Sen. Ernst's press secretary (h/t sister Lauren Claffey) ... Zach Cikanek, VP of public affairs at FP1 Strategies ... Robin Groulx, director of video at Axios ... Mike Burns, comms director for Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr., is 3-0 ... Obama Treasury alum Lennon Duggan ... Jeff Choudhry ... Debbie Matz ... Michael Wascom, SVP at The Moak Group ... Ella

Goodman ... Ryan Dalton, deputy director of N.Y. Gov. Andrew Cuomo's D.C. office ... Brian Wise, managing partner of Wise Public Affairs ...

... **Chris Hooton**, chief economist at the Internet Association, is 32 (h/t wife Hadas Gold) ... Politico's Jonathan Halling ... Terry O'Neill, who just wrapped up as president of NOW (h/t Kiki McLean) ... Megan Clasen, HFA alum and digital director extraordinaire at JB for Governor (h/t Anna Rosenfeld) ... Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.) is 6-0 ... Rep. John Faso (R-N.Y.) is 65 ... Rep. Susan Brooks (R-Ind.) is 56 ... Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.) is 45 (h/t Alex Macfarlane) ... former Rep. Ron Barber (D-Ariz.) is 72 ... Dave Hoppe is 66 ... Caroline Melo, a J.D. candidate at SMU Dedman law school ... William Flaherty ... Anna Mulrine ... Sarah Lee ... James Allen ... Sam Michelman, MBA candidate at Columbia Business School ... Clémentine Aymard Quinn ... Politico Europe's Christian Oliver ... Ted Metzger, supervising producer at CNN International ... Allison Davis O'Keefe ... Courtney Robinson ... Beth Burke ... Joe Walker ... Margo Hennigan ... Brian Majorsky ... Harley Mayersohn ... Robin Johnson is 59 ... PwC's Michael O'Brien is 45 ... Theresa Pagliocca ... Brian Sweeney ... Kim Warkentin ... Eric Stern ... Olivia Craighead (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Anthony Adragna[aadragna@politico.com]
From: Alex Guillen
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 12:32:11 PM
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Looping in Anthony, ME's author, but those numbers are good for me to have on hand for when this inevitably comes up later.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:26 AM
To: Alex Guillen <aguillen@politico.com>
Subject: FW: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

So you include half the story (Carper's story) but not the other half (EPA's story) that we've received to 11 of the 20 letters and that 7 of the past 9 are under 30 days.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrat-tom-carper-wont-support-trumps-epa-nominee-because-he-says-scott-pruitt-is-a-bad-penpal/article/2625486>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 5:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature. Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. Ed Markey is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat Tom Carper told ME he met with Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 — just under three weeks! — but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning vote on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said — and reiterated Monday — that he'd like to eventually package Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is a getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA rounded up compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

If you go: The hearing starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson appears before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then heads to a Senate Appropriations subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored

remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on more than two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction here.

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has proposed to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the

States released an outline of its Cooperative Federalism 2.0 approach between EPA — which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" — and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy argues in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader — at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller reports. The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released [an analysis](#) finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. [Dan Kildee](#) holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) released a [letter](#) urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a new report today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior launched a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign — entitled "Your Energy" — educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website here (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

— Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. Houston Chronicle.

— Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. API.

— TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. Bismarck Tribune.

— Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. Des Moines Register.

— BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. Reuters.

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "The Methanol Policy Forum," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — Senate committee hearing on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — American Petroleum Institute holds briefing on E15 and the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: fangs@api.org

11:00 a.m. — Rep. Dan Kildee holds press conference call with Sierra Club and AFGE on proposed EPA budget cuts, RSVP: mitchell.rivard@mail.house.gov

11:00 a.m. — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases report on ARPA-E program, National Academies' Keck Center, 500 Fifth St. NW, Room 100

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-023270>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a

nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials [instructed](#) government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance [memo](#) that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the

authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Zinke recommends shrinking Bears Ears monument [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument on Monday, trimming back the controversial Utah monument created by former President Barack Obama during his final days in office.

A preliminary review of the 1.4 million-acre monument that Zinke sent to the White House over the weekend shows his "belief that the monument needs to be right-sized," Zinke said in a statement.

Any move by President Donald Trump to alter the monument designed to protect thousands of sensitive archaeological sites will set off a legal fight with tribes and conservation groups that have complained the Native American ruins there were being damaged and would be threatened by oil and gas development in the area.

Zinke's [preliminary recommendations](#) to Trump show he did not plan to go as far as revoking Obama's monument designation — a move that has been sought by the state's congressional delegation.

"Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the

monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call.

Trump has ordered Zinke to review 22 of the national monuments that were established in the past two decades to determine if they should be altered or revoked. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House, and Zinke has extended the comment period on Bears Ears to July 10.

Zinke is also pressing Congress to look at the Bears Ears boundaries "to see whether the lands are more appropriately designated as national conservation areas or national recreation areas," he said. "There's certainly a high demand of recreation. There's certainly a demand for conservation in some parts, but we believe that those areas are better suited under congressionally mandated designations than they are a monument."

The secretary also asked Congress to grant tribes the ability to co-manage specific areas within Bears Ears, and for Congress to clarify how wilderness areas that overlap with monuments should be treated, an issue for Bears Ears and some other monuments under review.

A former congressman from Montana, Zinke cited his concern that the federal government restricts activities on the land it designates as protected, saying that designating a monument the size of Bears Ears where "multiple-use management is hindered or prohibited is not the best use of the land and is not in accordance with the intention of the Antiquities Act."

President Barack Obama created the monument in southeast Utah in December, angering Republicans who accused the administration of federal overreach by ignoring locals who opposed the move and using the Antiquities Act to cut off commercial activity such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Prior legislative attempts by the Utah delegation to curb federal monuments in the state have failed. Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz did manage last year to get their Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation through the Natural Resources Committee, which Bishop chairs, but it never received a floor vote.

If Trump ultimately decides to alter Bears Ears or the other monuments on the list, he is certain to face legal challenges from environmental groups. "An attack on one monument is an attack on all of them," said Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director at the Center for Western Priorities.

Past presidents have changed the size of monuments but none have revoked them entirely, and legal questions remain as to whether the law allows a president to fully undo their predecessor's actions.

Zinke last month traveled to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and this week he will head to New England to visit the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, which is also under review.

Zinke has repeatedly talked about the need to balance conservation with commercial and recreational demands on public lands, and has already this year ended the moratorium on new

coal leases and launched reviews on ways to open up more areas for oil and gas development.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Greens pan Zinke's Bears Ears plan, Utah lawmakers offer praise [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 05:02 PM EDT

Environmental and recreation groups slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation that President Donald Trump should shrink the Bears Ears National Monument, warning they would fight the move in court.

Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation, and NRDC President Rhea Suh said Zinke's proposal "sends a chilling signal about the Trump administration's intent to hand over irreplaceable American landscapes to mining and fossil fuel interests."

Zinke's preliminary report [recommended](#) Trump downsize the 1.4 million-acre Bears Ears monument and suggested Congress pass legislation that designates some portions as national recreation areas or national conservation areas.

But the Outdoor Industry Association noted that previous attempts to pass legislation on monuments in the last congress had fizzled. "We are worried that the legislative process would fail again, leaving these important areas unprotected," said Amy Roberts, OIA executive director.

Utah's Congressional delegation praised Zinke's call to reduce the size of the monument, even though the lawmakers had pushed to revoke the monument. Many of Zinke's recommendations are similar to a bill the delegation backed in the last Congress.

Sen. [Orrin Hatch](#) (R-Utah) in a tweeted [video](#) said Zinke's recommendation "reflects a balance of our shared priorities in protecting this land and the antiquities that are found on it, while still preserving local involvement and taking into consideration the needs of local communities." And Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) said Zinke's report "recognizes that local input should matter."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke has until Aug. 24 to make his final report on all 22 monuments he is reviewing and the agency is accepting public comments on all of them through July 10.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Eni submits plan to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/12/2017 05:54 PM EDT

BOEM is asking the public to weigh in on whether it should allow a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea.

Eni's move coincides with the Trump administration's push to open up more federal waters for oil and gas development. The Interior Department is currently reviewing how much of federal offshore holdings should be open to drilling.

Eni would drill into federal waters from its already existing facility in Alaska state waters, according to the [plan](#) it submitted to BOEM. The company proposes to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

WHAT'S NEXT: BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. The agency will take 30 days to evaluate Eni's plan.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Why China Is No Climate Leader [Back](#)

By Elizabeth Economy | 06/12/2017 04:57 PM EDT

When President Donald Trump yanked America's support for the Paris Climate Accords, pundits were quick to hail China as the world's new environmental leader. Two veteran journalists [wrote](#) that the decision was "the greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world."

But is leadership on climate change really a strategic gift? Do the Chinese want it? And above all, do they merit it? The quick answer is no, no and no.

True global leadership is costly: It requires vision, creativity, perseverance, deft diplomacy and often cold, hard cash. It also demands a willingness on the part of political leaders to align, and in some cases subordinate, their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community. The Chinese, including President Xi Jinping, understand this. That is why any number of Chinese analysts have been quick to reject the idea that Chinese leadership on climate change is realistic, [arguing](#) as one did, "Taking on global leadership is too much, too soon for China." Xi Jinping, himself, is somewhat less willing to reject the idea out of hand. China as a

global power shaping norms and institutions is a central element of his rejuvenation narrative. He therefore flirts with the prospect, proclaiming China ready to defend globalization and to protect the Paris climate agreement. But nowhere does Xi say that China will actually lead; that is left to others.

So where does China stand on the climate leadership spectrum? First, the good. It will meet its Paris commitment: By 2030, China's CO2 emissions will peak and its energy intensity (the amount of energy consumed per unit of GDP) will be reduced by 60-65 percent. In addition, Beijing is making strides toward rebalancing its energy mix. This year it cancelled 85 new coal fired power plants on top of the 18 that it cancelled last year; if brought on line, these 103 new plants would have exceeded China's 2020 targets of 1100GW of coal-fired power capacity by 150 GW. (By way of comparison, total U.S. energy produced from coal is 350GW.) Moreover, China has pledged not to approve new coal-fired power plants in as many as 13 provinces and regions until 2018. (Of course, one might reasonably ask what is happening in the other 18 provinces and regions, and what 2018 might bring.) China has also stepped up its commitment to renewable energy. In 2016 China invested \$78.3 billion in renewable energy—topping both Europe (\$59.8 billion) and the United States (\$46.4 billion). China also ranks first in terms of total installed renewable electric capacity. Much of this capacity, however, remains idle. In 2016, in three of the most wind power-rich provinces and regions—Gansu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia—for example, levels of curtailment (capacity not utilized) reached 43 percent, 38 percent and 21 percent respectively. The curtailment rate for solar energy was similarly high. In contrast, curtailment rates in the United States and Europe are generally between 0-5 percent. In the wait and see category, China is reportedly set to launch a nationwide CO2 cap and trade system sometime this year. This system could be spectacular, or it could be spectacularly embarrassing.

Now the bad. China is still the largest emitter of CO2 on the planet by a substantial margin, contributing 29 percent of the world's total CO2 emissions in 2015. The United States comes in a distant second at 14 percent. In addition, while Beijing is cutting back on coal-fired power plants—particularly in its wealthy and pollution-conscious coastal provinces—it is upping its count of CO2 emitting coal-to-chemical (including coal-to-gas) plants. There are 46 coal-to-chemical plants in operation and another 22 under construction that will add another 193 million tons of carbon emissions annually. A conservative estimate suggests that by 2020, such plants will contribute as much CO2 as all of Poland's contribution to global carbon emissions, while the extreme scenario—if China builds all the coal-to-chemical plants outlined in its 13th Five Year Plan—will lead to a contribution of almost 800 million tons per year, more than German's total carbon emissions in 2015, and equal to roughly 10 percent of China's current CO2 contribution.

China also falls short in the eyes of some independent monitoring groups that assess countries' climate commitments. The 2017 annual report by German Watch and the Climate Action Network ranks China 48th—just a few places behind the United States at 43rd—in terms of how much it has done to avoid climate change and how much it plans to do. True climate leadership belongs to the Europeans—France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, in particular—although even these climate leaders come in for some criticism. Moreover, the Climate Action Tracker, produced by three international research institutions, indicates that China's current emission reduction targets are not consistent with ensuring that the earth's warming remains below 2

degrees C.

And finally the ugly. Whatever positive steps China is taking at home are not being replicated in its behavior abroad. China is the world's largest exporter of coal-fired power plant finance and technology. Even as Xi is calling for an "international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road" (his comprehensive new trade and development initiative involving 65 countries), Beijing is backing more than 100 new coal-fired power projects in the Belt and Road countries. China's much-touted Belt and Road deals in Pakistan, for example, include plans for as many as 12 coal-fired power plants—even in areas recognized for their superior solar energy potential. In addition, China is actively pushing coal-to-chemical plants abroad. The Paris accords don't account for countries' actions outside their own borders, so China is not breaking the letter of its Paris commitments, but these Belt and Road investments are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the agreement.

Beyond the clear limitations of China's climate policies at home and abroad, there remains the larger question of diplomatic leadership. Will China rally other countries to adopt another round of more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets? Will it stop the overseas financing and sale of coal-fired power plants and coal-to-chemical plants? Will it push forward to limit other harmful greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane? Will it accede to international monitoring and verification of its emissions, an important measure it continues to reject? Thus far, there is no indication that China has plans to adopt any of these leadership-worthy measures.

When Trump, in the midst of withdrawing the United States from the Paris agreement, offered up the possibility of renegotiating the climate pact, the rest of the world in effect said, "not going to happen." Undoubtedly other countries are becoming accustomed to the idea of a world without American leadership. But filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today.

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Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to

fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon leapt into the public eye Monday morning via reports from security firms Dragos and ESET. Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a little-noticed cyberattack on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 digital strike on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's cyber information sharing center on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An industry coordinating group known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy, according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at the that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to a [summary report](#). But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its

formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload, the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

Tim Starks contributed to this report.

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DOJ will require GE to sell refinery chemicals business before Baker Hughes merger [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/12/2017 03:52 PM EDT

The Justice Department today said it will require General Electric to sell off its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants the government's blessing to merge with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes.

GE in March announced [plans to sell that division](#) to Suez, a French water and energy company, for \$3.4 billion. Carrying out that sale will satisfy the DOJ.

GE and Baker Hughes together represent two of the four major providers of refinery chemicals and services, which are classified as "process technologies." Allowing GE and Baker Hughes to combine their refinery chemicals division would hurt competitiveness and drive up prices, the DOJ argued.

The DOJ filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would

resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department. The proposal is subject to 60 days of public comment and court approval.

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Zinke orders review of sage grouse plans [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/07/2017 07:17 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order on Wednesday launching an internal review of the agency's sage grouse conservation plans across 11 Western states that aims to foster increased energy development.

The order, which will be released Thursday morning, directs the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to identify parts in BLM's 98 land use management plans that should be tweaked or rescinded because of their effect on development or due to differences with each state's own plans.

The review will focus on principal threats to the sage grouse habitat, such as invasive grasses and wildland fire, and will consider options like captive breeding and setting population targets — something the governors of Wyoming and Colorado [warned](#) may not be the right approach. Zinke directed the team to report back within 60 days.

Some governors have complained that the current management plans set under the Obama administration hinder their ability to develop oil and gas resources and create hurdles for timber harvesting and recreation, Zinke said in a press call.

But former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told POLITICO on Wednesday the existing management plans were "designed to be very flexible and to allow the states and the federal land management agencies to work together" to support both sage grouse conservation and energy development.

However, she acknowledged the agency's 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse as endangered or threatened was not fully hashed out. "When you do something on this scope and scale, you haven't refined all the details yet," Jewell said. What matters is that "everybody understands that they need to protect critical habitat if that decision to not list the bird is going to stick."

The Western Energy Alliance, an oil and gas industry group, has challenged some of the existing plans in court and says the agency ignored the technological advances that reduce the impact of fossil fuel extraction on the sage grouse habitat, which spans all of the major producing basins in Wyoming, Utah, Montana and parts of Colorado.

Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma said Interior should defer more to states since they know where the sage grouse is most active, and she isn't worried that reworking the plans could take years.

"What risk is there?" Sgamma said. "Development is at practically a standstill already in sage grouse habitat."

Conservation groups contend Zinke's move will prioritize energy development over conservation.

"Zinke seems to believe that the highest and best use of America's public lands is for the development of dirty fossil fuels and so it's unsurprising that he's proposing to take a look at gutting protections for an imperiled species to benefit that industry," said Ted Zukoski, an Earthjustice staff attorney who has represented conservation groups in legal battles over sage grouse plans in Wyoming and Utah.

Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said Zinke's idea to set population targets for states could actually increase the likelihood the FWS will later list the bird, since the agency would have to revisit the decision if states fail to meet their targets.

"The very thing that some folks and industry are fearing, which is not being able to do anything, would almost definitely occur if they went on the path they're proposing," O'Mara said.

Nada Culver, senior counsel and director of The Wilderness Society's BLM Action Center, said the existing plans do not need to be scrapped but rather the agency can better clarify how fossil fuel and renewable energy projects can be developed in sage grouse habitat. "There's room in the plan to do that," she said.

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From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 8:34:16 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Here is the updated Flint one: <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:13 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
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From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an

environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts. Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's

drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast

and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting

vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

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The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that is has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the

Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable

fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

James Hewitt

Environmental Protection Agency

Special Advisor for Public Affairs

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 8/24/2017 10:30:29 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Chevron: SCOOP: ANDY HEMMING out at WH -- TRUMP's heated calls with senators -- THE JUICE: PERRY bringing family and friends on trip abroad -- RISA HELLER drops Kushner Cos. as a client -- JAY SOLOMON's new job

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Chevron

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Happy Thursday. AN INTERESTING DATAPOINT -- TONY FABRIZIO, whom the Trump campaign paid \$1.29 million last year, released polling on Twitter yesterday about the president's standing against other Republicans. **54%** of definite GOP primary voters would vote for Trump, **13%** would vote for Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and **10%** would vote for John Kasich. **JUST 49%** say they'd definitely vote for Trump. **20%** of definite GOP voters are undecided. **FEWER THAN 60% OF REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS** want Trump to be the nominee again in 2020, and it's August 2017. This poll is measuring against a field -- it's not head to head. **The poll** <http://politi.co/2vYRTuH>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: W.H. RAPID RESPONSE DIRECTOR IS OUT -- ANDY HEMMING left his job on Monday as the White House director of rapid response, according to multiple sources. A source familiar with the move told us it was a "mutually agreed upon" separation, and Hemming now plans to take a vacation (in which golf may play a big part) and then explore future opportunities. Right before his departure, he was profiled by Annie Karni (<http://politi.co/2g79s6m>) as the staffer the White House pays "\$89,000 a year to spot and distribute positive stories from the mainstream media."

HEMMING WAS SENIOR ADVISER for research at the RNC in the 2016 cycle and director of research on the Trump campaign. At the White House, he worked from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. every weekday and was a regular in reporters' inboxes, blasting out stories favorable to the administration. Hemming declined to comment. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told us that it was a "[m]utual decision that he could best help promote the president's agenda on the outside. Andy is smart and very talented and we wish him all the best."

-- PARTY IN KAZAKHSTAN AND UKRAINE!: Energy Secretary Rick Perry is leading a

presidential delegation to Kazakhstan for Expo 2017 and then heading on to Ukraine next week, and he is bringing his wife, daughter, son-in-law and friends. The Energy Department tells Playbook that Perry's family and friends will be reimbursing the government for all costs associated with the trip.

-- @CREWcrew: "Did Steven Mnuchin & Louise Linton use a gov't plane to get a better view of the eclipse? We FOIA'd to find out." <http://bit.ly/2vhYUnR>

SCOOP FROM CNN's MANU RAJU and MARSHALL COHEN: "Top Trump aide's email draws new scrutiny in Russia inquiry": "Congressional investigators have unearthed an email from a top Trump aide that referenced a previously unreported effort to arrange a meeting last year between Trump campaign officials and Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

"The aide, Rick Dearborn, who is now President Donald Trump's deputy chief of staff, sent a brief email to campaign officials last year relaying information about an individual who was seeking to connect top Trump officials with Putin, the sources said. The person was only identified in the email as being from 'WV,' which one source said was a reference to West Virginia. It's unclear who the individual is, what he or she was seeking, or whether Dearborn even acted on the request. One source said that the individual was believed to have had political connections in West Virginia, but details about the request and who initiated it remain vague.

"The same source said Dearborn in the email appeared skeptical of the requested meeting. Sources said the email occurred in June 2016 around the time of the recently revealed Trump Tower meeting where Russians with Kremlin ties met with the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., his son-in-law Jared Kushner as well as then-campaign chairman, Paul Manafort." <http://cnn.it/2wAdHyB>

BEHIND THE SCENES -- "Trump clashed with multiple GOP senators over Russia: The conversations are evidence of rising tensions between the president and congressional Republicans heading into a critical legislative span," by Josh Dawsey and Elana Schor: "President Donald Trump privately vented his frustration over Russia-related matters with at least two other Republican senators this month, according to people familiar with the conversations - in addition to the president's public admonishments of Mitch McConnell, John McCain, and Jeff Flake. Trump expressed frustration over a bipartisan bill sanctioning Russia and tried to convince Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) that it wasn't good policy ...

"Trump argued that the legislation was unconstitutional and said it would damage his presidency. Corker was unrelenting ... and told Trump the bill was going to pass both houses with bipartisan support. ... Trump dialed up Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) on Aug. 7, two days before a blunt call with the Senate majority leader that spilled over into a public feud. Tillis is working with Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) on a bill designed to protect Robert Mueller, the independent counsel investigating the president's Russia connections, from any attempt by Trump to fire him." <http://politi.co/2v8Suvj>

THE PRESIDENT V. MITCH MCCONNELL -- "Trump met with potential Flake challengers before Phoenix rally," by Alex Isenstadt in Phoenix: "President Donald Trump continues to amp up the pressure on Sen. Jeff Flake, savaging the Arizona Republican on Twitter and holding a private meeting with several of his prospective primary opponents. Before taking the stage in Phoenix on Tuesday evening for a campaign-style rally, the president huddled backstage with state Treasurer Jeff DeWit and former state GOP Chairman Robert Graham. Both are considering running against Flake, an outspoken critic of the president who recently published an anti-Trump book, 'Conscience of a Conservative.' Trump ripped the Arizona senator during the brief meeting, calling him 'the flake,' according to three people who provided an account of the discussion. Trump also discussed the potential for a primary challenge to Flake and told DeWit and Graham, both of whom have aligned with the president, to get back to him about their interest in running." <http://politi.co/2wHq0rU>

NOTHING TO SEE HERE ... STATEMENT FROM MCCONNELL: "The President and I, and our teams, have been and continue to be in regular contact about our shared goals. We are working together to develop tax reform and infrastructure legislation so we can grow the economy and create jobs; to prevent a government default; to fund the government so we can advance our priorities in the short and long terms; to pass the defense authorization and defense appropriations bills so we can support our troops and help implement an effective strategy against ISIL; to provide relief from Obamacare; and to continue our progress for our nation's veterans.

"We have a lot of work ahead of us, and we are committed to advancing our shared agenda together and anyone who suggests otherwise is clearly not part of the conversation."

-- WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT -- WE'LL MEET, BUT THAT WAS SCHEDULED BEFORE WE WERE BEEFING!: "President Donald J. Trump and Senator Mitch McConnell remain united on many shared priorities, including middle class tax relief, strengthening the military, constructing a southern border wall, and other important issues. They will hold previously scheduled meetings following the August recess to discuss these critical items with members of the congressional leadership and the President's Cabinet. White House and leadership staff are coordinating regarding the details of those meetings."

***** **A message from Chevron:** When an endangered butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery, we protected the habitat and still plant the only thing they eat-buckwheat. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2ie5v0A> *****

DEPT. OF CONTINUITY -- "Trump's whiplash: Three personas in three speeches, but the same president," by WaPo's Phil Rucker: "In the span of 48 hours this week, President Trump has boomeranged among three roles: the commander in chief, the divider and the uniter. Like a contestant on one of his reality TV shows, Trump has taken on contrasting personas, showcasing divergent traits with flourishes seemingly to

survive another day of his beleaguered presidency. Or, as Trump the television producer might put it, to keep up the ratings." <http://wapo.st/2wHldXz>

-- **NYT: "Different Day, Different Audience, and a Completely Different Trump,"** by Mark Landler: "It was a day-and-night contrast to Mr. Trump's performance Tuesday night in Phoenix, where he lurched from subject to subject and accused the news media of ignoring what he insisted had been his message of unity in the aftermath of Charlottesville. But such contrasts have become a recurring motif of his presidency: Mr. Trump has toggled between Teleprompter Trump and Unplugged Trump every day since the deadly clashes in Virginia, leaving Washington and the rest of the nation with a chronic case of rhetorical whiplash." <http://nyti.ms/2iuNsDw>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "White House has paperwork ready for Joe Arpaio pardon," by CNN's Kaitlan Collins: "The White House has prepared the paperwork for President Trump to pardon former sheriff Joe Arpaio when he makes the final decision to do so, CNN has learned. An administration official said the White House has also prepared talking points to send to surrogates after he is pardoned. One of the talking points is that Arpaio served his country for 50 years in the military, the Drug Enforcement Administration and as Arizona's Maricopa County sheriff, and that it is not appropriate to send him to prison for 'enforcing the law' and 'working to keep people safe.'" <http://cnn.it/2it0Fg4>

-- **THE WHITE HOUSE** would be wise to do this when Congress is out of session.

ANOTHER ANNIE KARNI SCOOP -- "New York PR maven Risa Heller drops Kushner Cos.": "Crisis management consultant Risa Heller has dropped Kushner Cos., the family real estate company of President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, as a client, according to two sources familiar with the arrangement. Heller dropped the client earlier this week after representing the company for just over a year and a half. That's longer than many of her predecessors working in media relations with Charlie Kushner, Jared's father and the family patriarch, have lasted in a job representing a famously acerbic boss and convicted felon. A new spokesman for Kushner Companies, however, disputed that account and said the company decided to replace Heller this week. Heller declined to comment." <http://politi.co/2wArGnN>

-- **VIDEO OF KUSHNER AND BIBI** <http://bit.ly/2viu2mV>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "White House Sets Rules for Military Transgender Ban," by WSJ's Gordon Lubold: "The White House is expected to send guidance to the Pentagon in coming days on how to implement a new administration ban on transgender people in the military, issuing a policy that will allow Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to consider a service member's ability to deploy in deciding whether to kick them out of the military. The White House memo also directs the Pentagon to deny admittance to transgender individuals and to stop spending on medical treatment regimens for those currently serving, according to U.S. officials familiar with the document. The 2½-page memo gives Mr. Mattis six months to prepare to fully implement the new ban, according to

these officials." <http://on.wsj.com/2xtR2jx>

MORE RESIGNATIONS -- "Infrastructure Advisers Quit, Say Trump's Actions Threaten Homeland Security," by HuffPost's Dana Liebelson: "Another White House council has taken a hit after President Donald Trump's controversial response to a deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Seven members of the National Infrastructure Advisory Council, which includes Obama appointees, resigned this week, citing Trump's Charlottesville response and other issues. 'Your actions have threatened the security of the homeland I took an oath to protect,' the resigning members wrote in a letter sent Monday and obtained by HuffPost. They referenced the Aug. 15 press conference about infrastructure reform in which Trump suggested the 'alt-left' was also guilty of instigating violence in Charlottesville. 'You failed to denounce the intolerance and violence of hate groups,' the letter read." <http://bit.ly/2xeYsb5>

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- He is meeting with H.R. McMaster and then OMB Director Mick Mulvaney and the Office of Legislative Affairs.

THE JUICE ...

-- **ELIZABETH DREW (@ElizabethDrewOH):** "Due to a decision I didn't make, I'll not be covering Washington politics for New York Review. You'll find my work elsewhere. Details tk."

-- **THE RNC'S RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE** passed a resolution Wednesday at its summer meeting in Nashville condemning KKK/white supremacists. The full RNC will vote on it Friday, RNC spokesman Ryan Mahoney told us.

-- **CARSON WATCH, PER OUR COLLEAGUE LORRAINE WOELLERT:** After HUD Secretary Ben Carson made a cameo at Trump's rally in Phoenix, Chris Lu, a former deputy secretary of labor in the Obama administration, joined others filing complaints with the Office of Special Counsel. An announcer at the political confab introduced Carson as HUD secretary, a no-no that might violate the Hatch Act, which prohibits public servants from politicking on the job, Lu wrote. (You might remember that Carson's predecessor, Julian Castro, got into Hatch Act hot water when he endorsed Hillary Clinton while still at HUD.)

A HUD spokesman said Carson attended the Trump event in his personal capacity. The agency didn't pay for his travel and lodging and he didn't mention HUD business. "We don't believe there was a Hatch Act violation," HUD said in a written statement. "We are unaware of what instructions, if any, were provided to the announcer." HUD says it is checking with its ethics office to make sure it doesn't happen again.

REMINDER -- PLAYBOOK ON THE ROAD is nearly coming to an end. Send us a photo of yourself or others reading Playbook during your travels this month and we will feature five photos every Friday. Participating Playbookers will automatically be entered into a drawing to win a signed cartoon by POLITICO's Pulitzer-winning cartoonist Matt

Wuerker. Email photos to Daniel at daniel@politico.com. Or, tweet them to @playbookplus with the hashtag #PlaybookLoyal.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR : President Donald Trump greets supporters as he arrives in Reno, Nev., on Aug. 23, prior to a speech before the American Legion national convention. | Nicholas Kamm/AFP/Getty Images

THE OPPOSITION -- "Castro twins' political ambitions collide," by Isaac Dove: "Texas Democrats desperately want Rep. Joaquín Castro to run for governor next year - and they're frustrated by what they see as his twin brother's presidential ambitions getting in the way. The congressman's decision as to whether to run against Republican Gov. Greg Abbott is caught up in the Castro brothers' unique mix of their deep personal connection and parallel political ambitions. Joaquín Castro is being hounded by Democrats to get in but is torn, according to people who've spoken with him, over whether to take on a popular incumbent with \$40 million in the bank.

"That's where his identical twin brother, Julián Castro, comes in. The former Housing and Urban Development secretary and 2012 Democratic convention speaker recently launched a PAC and is spending the fall writing an autobiographical, campaign-style book, and has made his interest in 2020 clear. The brothers serve as each other's top strategists, and they've agreed that Julián's next political move takes primacy for now. One worry is that a Joaquín loss for governor - it would be an uphill battle, at best, against Abbott - would make the Castros look like losers. The other is that if Joaquín happened to pull off an upset, it would distract attention from Julián, potentially complicating his path to the White House." <http://politi.co/2wAS9S6>

THE NEW SHERIFF -- "Kelly moves to control the information Trump sees," by Eliana Johnson and Nancy Cook: "Confronted with a West Wing that treated policymaking as a free-for-all, President Donald Trump's chief of staff John Kelly is instituting a system used by previous administrations to limit internal competition -and to make himself the last word on the material that crosses the president's desk. ... In a conference call last week, Kelly initiated a new policymaking process in which just he and one other aide - White House staff secretary Rob Porter, a little-known but highly regarded Rhodes Scholar who overlapped with Jared Kushner as an undergraduate at Harvard - will review all documents that cross the Resolute Desk.

"The new system, laid out in two memos co-authored by Kelly and Porter and distributed to cabinet members and White House staffers in recent days, is designed to ensure that the president won't see any external policy documents, internal policy memos, agency reports, and even news articles that haven't been vetted. Kelly's deputy, Kristjen Nielson, is also expected to assume an integral role."

<http://politi.co/2wHMwkw>

NYT, A1 ALEX BURNS -- "Rabbis Protest Trump's Comments by Boycotting Conference Call": "For years, the presidential conference calls were a nonpartisan holiday tradition: President Barack Obama would speak by phone with hundreds of rabbis in advance of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, in what participants described as a meeting of minds, largely free of raw politics.

"But that emerging tradition was thrown into jeopardy on Wednesday, in a sign of the still-intensifying backlash against President Trump's response to the violence this month in Charlottesville, Va. Four coalitions of rabbis, hailing from different strains of American Judaism, publicly spurned Mr. Trump, denouncing him in unusually pointed language, and pre-emptively announcing that they would not participate in any conference call before the Jewish holidays next month." <http://nyti.ms/2wqtCi8>

***** **A message from Chevron :** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat-buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video:
<http://politi.co/2ie5v0A> *****

FUTURECAST -- "Inside Waymo's Secret World for Training Self-Driving Cars: An exclusive look at how Alphabet understands its most ambitious artificial intelligence project," by Alexis C. Madrigal in The Atlantic: "In a corner of Alphabet's campus, there is a team working on a piece of software that may be the key to self-driving cars. No journalist has ever seen it in action until now. They call it Carcraft, after the popular game World of Warcraft. ... This is the tool that's accelerated the development of autonomous vehicles at Waymo, which Alphabet (née Google) spun out of its 'moon-shot' research wing, X, in December of 2016. If Waymo can deliver fully autonomous vehicles in the next few years, Carcraft should be remembered as a virtual world that had an outsized role in reshaping the actual world on which it is based."
<http://theatln.tc/2xuZOOe>

MEGATRENDS -- "Alaska's Permafrost is Thawing: The loss of frozen ground in Arctic regions is a striking result of climate change. And it is also a cause of more warming to come," by NYT's Henry Fountain: "Starting just a few feet below the surface and extending tens or even hundreds of feet down, [the permafrost] contains vast amounts of carbon in organic matter - plants that took carbon dioxide from the atmosphere centuries ago, died and froze before they could decompose. Worldwide, permafrost is thought to contain about twice as much carbon as is currently in the atmosphere. Once this ancient organic material thaws, microbes convert some of it to carbon dioxide and methane, which can flow into the atmosphere and cause even more warming. Scientists have estimated that the process of permafrost thawing could contribute as much as 1.7 degrees Fahrenheit to global warming over the next several centuries, independent of what society does to reduce emissions from burning fossil fuels and other activities." <http://nyti.ms/2xuydgo>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Top Think Tank Hires Ex-WSJ Reporter Jay Solomon for North Korea Project," by Jerusalem Post's Michael Wilner: "Solomon will serve for three months as a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, focusing on Pyongyang's sale of missile systems from Yemen and Egypt to Syria and Iran. ... Solomon was let go from the Journal in June after his correspondence with an Iranian source was leaked to the Associated Press, revealing exchanges that raised questions over the nature of their relationship. The source- Farhad Azima, an Iranian aviation mogul who was already under investigation by the wire service- offered Solomon a stake in a new venture by e-mail." <http://bit.ly/2vrjem1>

--"Wall Street Journal Editor Admonishes Reporters Over Trump Coverage," by NYT's Michael M. Grynbaum: "Gerard Baker, the editor in chief of The Wall Street Journal, has faced unease and frustration in his newsroom over his stewardship of the newspaper's coverage of President Trump, which some journalists there say has lacked toughness and verve. Some staff members expressed similar concerns on Wednesday after Mr. Baker, in a series of blunt late-night emails, criticized his staff over their coverage of Mr. Trump's Tuesday rally in Phoenix, describing their reporting as overly opinionated. 'Sorry. This is commentary dressed up as news reporting,' Mr. Baker wrote at 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday morning to a group of Journal reporters and editors, in response to a draft of the rally article that was intended for the newspaper's final edition. He added in a follow-up, 'Could we please just stick to reporting what he said rather than packaging it in exegesis and selective criticism?'" <http://nyti.ms/2xulUzs>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Ory Rinat, the White House's chief digital officer, last night at Kapnos on 14th Street ... **@RepAnnWagner:** "Visited the DMZ between North & South Korea. Yes, that is a North Korean soldier staring at us through the window." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2vqJkWG>

TRANSITIONS -- Brittany Uter is joining Facebook next month to work on strategic communications for its news partnerships team in New York. She was most recently senior communications manager at Vox Media.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Todd Harris, partner at Something Else Strategies. **A fun fact about him:** "I was in a band in high school. We were called 'The Wake.' I sang lead vocals, played keyboards and programmed the drum machine (give me a break, it was the '80's). We wanted to be like The Smiths meet Depeche Mode, but probably sounded more like a cross between a dying cat and a malfunctioning computer." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xeYfoF>

BIRTHDAYS: Nick Denton is 51 ... David Gregory, CNN political analyst, is 46 ... former Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.) is 75 (hat tip: John Marshall) ... Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) is

65 ... Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WVa.) is 7-0. He's spending time with his family, fishing and celebrating his recent 50th wedding anniversary to Gayle (h/ts Steve Clemons and Jonathan Kott) ... Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) is 7-0 ... Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.) is 45 ... Rep. John Culberson (R-Texas) is 61 ... Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.) is 56 ... Major Garrett is 55 ... Mike Huckabee is 62. He's celebrating by watching daughter Sarah's three kids who are all at his house in Florida (h/t Sarah) ... Galia Slayen, comms director for Illinois gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker, turns "twentysomething" (h/t Sadie Weiner) ... Ricki Seidman, comms specialist and senior principal at TSD, Obama, DOJ and Clinton alum (h/t Jon Haber and Tim Burger) ... Catherine Lowe ... James Meek (h/ts Burger) ... David Molina (h/t Mallory Howe) ... Sahar Wali, national comms director for SEIU ... Jane Brown of UnitedHealth Group ...

... **Natalie Strom**, assistant WH press secretary (h/ts Sarah Sanders, Alex Stroman, Fred Brown and Marlon Bateman) ... Betsy Wright Hawkings, program director for the Governance Initiative at the Democracy Fund (hubby tip: David) ... Politico's Brendan Cheney ... George Haydock ... Seyward Darby ... Mary Hood ... Bonnie Reiss ... Geo Saba, military LA to Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) who was profiled in the San Jose Mercury News (<http://bayareane.ws/2vfo7iD>), is 25 (h/t Heather Purcell) ... Pam Coulter ... "Inside City Hall" host Errol Louis ... Brad Bainum, press secretary for American Bridge (h/t Kevin McAllister) ... Abbie McDonough ... Politico Europe's Nadia Chabane ... Aaron Houston ... JB Britten ... Erik Brydges ... USC student Morgan Buckley ... Justin Roth ... Meagan Shephard ... Zach Zampella ... Carissa Gillespie ... James Manasco ... Dabnesy Hegg ... Merrit (Martin) Gillard ... Randan Swindler ... Harry Rhoads Jr. ... Lisa Reed ... Courtney Robinson ... Danny Finnegan is 55 ... Trey Barnes ... Joann Orner ... Emily Cherniack, founder and executive director of New Politics (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat-buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2ie5v0A> *****

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Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 10:33:30 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by POET: TRUMP'S lunch companions today -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Sergey Kislyak plays host for Russia Day -- the DAWSEY DOWNLOAD -- GOP and DEM talking points on Sessions -- GOP to Trump: Don't dump Mueller -- B'DAY: Eli Stokols

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by POET
06/13/2017 06:29 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Good Tuesday morning. FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: As Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell works to craft an Obamacare replacement bill, **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** is having lunch today with 13 senators to "discuss the status" of the process. **TRUMP'S DINING PARTNERS:** Sens. Rob Portman (Ohio), John Thune (S.D.), Pat Toomey (Pa.), Mike Lee (Utah), Ted Cruz (Texas), Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), John Barrasso (Wyo.), Cory Gardner (Colo.), Tom Cotton (Ark.), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Susan Collins (Maine), Joni Ernst (Iowa) and Orrin Hatch (Utah).

-- HEALTH CARE STATUS REPORT: BURGESS EVERETT: "Senate GOP reins in expectations for killing Obamacare: Some Republican lawmakers are growing worried about their tight time frame for overhauling health care": "Senate Republicans are aggressively trying to rein in expectations for their Obamacare repeal effort, wary of blowing a deadline or falling short of 50 votes on a promise that has driven the GOP's political strategy for much of the past decade. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is still aiming for an Obamacare repeal vote in June, though his lieutenants acknowledge that deadline could slip into July. And while GOP leaders want to hold the vote as soon as possible, Republicans continue to avoid hard deadlines and say factors outside their control could strike.

"'It's like having a baby,' said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). 'It's not here yet, but it's coming.' ... A public copy of the bill or the CBO score are not expected until just days before any vote, minimizing the ability of opposition to mobilize, aides said. If a June vote is not possible, Republicans hope to at least to have an agreement on a bill before heading home for the July 4 recess." <http://politi.co/2rITGcD>

PLAYBOOK EXCLUSIVE -- SERGEY KISLYAK TRYING TO REPAIR FRAYED U.S.-

RUSSIA RELATIONS: Embattled Russian diplomat Sergey Kislyak played host to Washington insiders and diplomats at the Russian Embassy Monday night, greeting guests one-by-one in a long receiving line at the embassy in honor of Russia Day. Attendees were encouraged to pose for photos with signs that said "I love Russia" and post them on Facebook, Instagram and other social networks.

The frayed U.S.-Russia relationship was clearly on the embassy's mind as they handed out a pamphlet highlighting the two countries' close relationship. On the cover: "As an American, I love Russia - friend of Washington and Lincoln." At the top of the second page, there was this: "As an American, I love Russia because if not for Russia, there may not have been a United States of America."

Russia's top seven reasons for the close U.S.-Russia ties: "1. During the birth of our Nation, Russia supported the Thirteen Colonies in their way of Independence from Britain. 2. Russia helped preserve the Union during the American Civil War. 3. Alaska, California and Hawaii became States of the Union due to friendly US-Russian relations. 4. Russia was our ally in both World Wars 5. Russian International Peace Initiatives are the foundation of the United Nations. 6. Russian Arts and Sciences have enriched the world, and Russian Americans have made great contributions to American culture. 7. Russian President Putin was the first to call American President Bush to offer help and condolences after the tragedy of 9/11."

SPEAKING OF THOSE CLOSE TIES -- "Russian Breach of 39 States Threatens Future U.S. Elections," by Bloomberg's Michael Riley and Jordan Robertson: "Russian hackers hit election systems in at least 39 states before Donald Trump's election as president, according to a person with direct knowledge of the matter, an attack on almost twice as many states as previously reported. The hacks were part of a wave of intrusions in the summer and fall of 2016, details of which were provided by the person and two others familiar with a U.S. investigation of the attacks. Hackers breached a campaign finance database in at least one unidentified state, they said, and tried to alter or delete data from a voter database in Illinois.

"The scope and sophistication of the attacks so concerned the White House that Obama administration officials for the first time used a dedicated communication channel -- the cyber equivalent of the nuclear 'red phone' -- to signal to the Kremlin that the attacks risked escalating into a broader conflict, according to two of the people. The U.S. also provided detailed documents it considered proof of an act of aggression, which they said met with a chilly Russian response." <https://bloom.bg/2rVU2p9>

-- COMING ATTRACTIONS: "Senate deal to boost Russia sanctions seen as imminent," by Elana Schor: "Senators are vetting the language of a bipartisan deal to punish Russia that would allow Congress to disapprove of any attempt by President Donald Trump to ease sanctions on Moscow, Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker said late Monday. Whether the Tennessee Republican's optimism translates into a vote

this week remains to be seen, however, with Democrats declining to confirm that a deal is done.

"If the Senate can pass a strong Russia sanctions package, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) could both claim a measure of victory - while also dealing a blow to the White House, which has floated a possible deal to roll back penalties on Vladimir Putin's government in exchange for further cooperation on anti-terrorism efforts." <http://politi.co/2tgm2li>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: THE DAWSEY DOWNLOAD -- "One of President Trump's closest friends spent several hours in the White House Monday and emerged to say on TV that the president may fire Robert Mueller, the special prosecutor, and that it would be a 'significant mistake.' It was an only-in-Trump's White House kind of moment.

"Senior aides said the friend, Chris Ruddy, was only speculating, and said Trump was unlikely to can the former FBI director. One official said Ruddy didn't meet with the president -- but instead spent several hours with senior administration aides. 'I wouldn't take it too seriously,' a White House official said.

"The reality is that Trump has sounded out associates about his concerns over Mueller -- and no one knows what he might do. Trump would be making a big mistake if he tried to fire Mueller, and they don't believe he will, aides said. He has been warned against it 'by almost everyone,' one adviser said. But he is often governed by self-preservation. He hates losing control of situations. He often lashes out when he feels someone could damage him. Plus, surrogates have begun telling him what trouble Mueller could pose. He met several times with New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie at Bedminster over the weekend.

"So, yes, it seems unlikely Trump will try to fire Mueller. But then again, no one expected him to fire James Comey."

-- **SPICER STATEMENT,** delivered by email from Sean to reporters: "Mr. Ruddy never spoke to the President regarding this issue. With respect to this subject, only the President or his attorneys are authorized to comment."

-- **RUDDY DOUBLES DOWN** , in email to us: "Spicer issued a bizarre late night press release that a) doesn't deny my claim the President is considering firing Mueller and b) says I didn't speak to the President about the matter -- when I never claimed to have done so. Memo to Sean: focus your efforts on exposing the flim-flam Russian allegations against POTUS and highlighting his remarkable achievements! Don't waste time trying to undermine one of your few allies."

-- **THE STRANGE THING:** The White House still won't comment on if, in fact, the president is considering getting rid of Mueller.

BUT, BUT, BUT ... -- "Republicans to Trump: Hands off Mueller," by Austin Wright

and Kyle Cheney: "Republican lawmakers have a warning for President Donald Trump: Don't mess with Robert Mueller. Some Trump allies have begun agitating for Trump to fire the man appointed just last month as a special counsel to oversee the Justice Department's investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. ... But that would be a huge mistake, Republican lawmakers said Monday. 'It would be a disaster,' said Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) 'There's no reason to fire Mueller. What's he done to be fired?'" <http://politi.co/2rqdnvd>

-- **COME ON, NEWT! @ReaganBattalion:** "Less than a month ago @newtgingrich hailed Mueller as a 'superb choice' with an 'IMPECCABLE' reputation. Today he says he can't be trusted." <http://bit.ly/2sWRupg>

***** **A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** Led by scientists and engineers, POET operates 30 biofuel facilities & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. We produce a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. We're POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). *****

HAPPENING TODAY -- "Sessions to face sharp questions on Russia contacts," by AP's Eric Tucker and Deb Riechmann: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions is preparing for sharp questions from his former Senate colleagues about his role in the firing of James Comey, his Russian contacts during the campaign and his decision to recuse from an investigation into possible ties between Moscow and associates of President Donald Trump. The public testimony Tuesday before the Senate intelligence committee should yield Sessions' most extensive comments to date on questions that have dogged his entire tenure as attorney general and that led him three months ago to step aside from the Russia probe." <http://apne.ws/2rquQ6D>

-- **WHAT NOT TO EXPECT: "Sessions won't reveal information about conversations with Trump,"** by Tara Palmeri and Josh Gerstein: "Jeff Sessions does not plan to reveal information about his private conversations with President Donald Trump during his testimony tomorrow before the Senate Intel Committee, according to sources close to the Attorney General. The sources said the former senator and Trump loyalist is unlikely to talk about any direct conversations with the president. 'I wouldn't expect the attorney general to discuss that,' the source said. It was unclear whether the Attorney General would cite executive privilege as such, or simply say he wants to preserve the confidentiality of his discussions with Trump." <http://politi.co/2svFrly> ... ***The Sessions hearing is today at 2:30 p.m. in Hart 216.***

THE TALKING POINTS ...

-- **Johanna Persing**, RNC director of media affairs, emailed GOP communicators late Monday with a series of talking points for surrogates ahead of Sessions' hearing. GOP talking points include: Trump has done nothing wrong; Sessions "continues to be open, honest and transparent;" Sessions' meeting with Russian officials is standard practice; and asks surrogates to push for more answers on former Attorney General Loretta Lynch and fired FBI director James Comey's interactions. ***The email***

<http://politi.co/2rqfSh6>

-- **Constance Boozer**, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's director of surrogate and media affairs, emailed "friends and allies" Monday afternoon with their own set of talking points ahead of the Sessions hearing. Topline message: Sessions needs to answer several questions and to step down. "The fact that he isn't willing to appear before the Committee with jurisdiction over the Department of Justice, the Judiciary Committee, shows that 'the cloud' of the Russia investigation makes it impossible for him to do the job of Attorney General," Boozer wrote. **The email** <http://politi.co/2rqbVci>

WHAT TRUMP WANTS TO BE TALKING ABOUT -- "Trump's White House wants to change the subject: Trump, smarting over coverage of Russia probes, thinks his administration doesn't get enough credit," by Matt Nussbaum and Josh Dawsey: "The White House has been spending more time trying to focus staff on weekly agenda items, two administration officials said. Senior officials have tried to cheer up younger aides by reminding them that 'voters aren't going to make their choices based on some hard-to-understand, he-said, she-said accusation,' one said, adding that the White House believes voters will stand by them if the economy remains strong. ... Trump also inaccurately declared on Monday that he'd 'passed more legislation' than any predecessor besides Franklin D. Roosevelt. Harry Truman passed 55 bills in his first 100 days, while Trump had signed 48 by his 142nd day. Many of those have been to designate buildings or other less noticeable actions." **With a Josh Holmes cameo** <http://politi.co/2rqik75>

DEMOCRATS' SILVER LINING -- "Trump hearings hatch Democratic stars," by Gabe Debenedetti: "California Sen. Kamala Harris had the latest star turn last week, with her tough interrogation of Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and National Security Agency Director Adm. Mike Rogers and questioning of former FBI Director James Comey. Before that, it was Minnesota Sen. Al Franken, whose revealing cross-examination of Attorney General Jeff Sessions sparked a boomlet of fresh presidential speculation earlier this year. Virginia Sen. Mark Warner has seen his work on the Senate Intelligence Committee suddenly revive talk of his national prospects, which had faded after he laid the groundwork roughly a decade ago. ...

"The beneficiaries of the surge in attention aren't limited to members of the key committees on the Trump beat - the Intelligence and Judiciary panels. First-term Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, for example, has been especially active in speaking out about the Russia probes and on immigration, leading to reports that the White House is now eying him as a potential 2020 opponent. Yet it's the former prosecutors Harris, Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and California Rep. Adam Schiff who have been front-and-center in harnessing the party's fury, largely because they've been the ones in the televised spotlight." <http://politi.co/2siKKny>

DEPT. OF YA CAN'T MAKE IT UP -- "Former NBA player Dennis Rodman arrives in North Korea," by AP's Eric Talmadge in Pyongyang: "Dennis Rodman, the former NBA bad boy who has palled around with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, flew back

to Pyongyang on Tuesday for the first time in Donald Trump's presidency. He said he is 'just trying to open a door' on a mission that he thinks his former 'Celebrity Apprentice' boss would support. Rodman, one of the few people to know both of the nuclear-armed leaders, sported a black T-shirt advertising a marijuana cybercurrency as he talked to reporters briefly before his flight from Beijing to the North Korean capital. Asked if he had spoken to Trump about his trip, he said, 'Well, I'm pretty sure he's pretty much happy with the fact that I'm over here trying to accomplish something that we both need.'

...

"We are aware of his visit. We wish him well, but we have issued travel warnings to Americans and suggested they not travel to North Korea for their own safety,' U.S. Undersecretary of State Thomas Shannon told reporters after discussing the North Korean missile threat and other issues with Japanese counterparts."

<http://apne.ws/2tguZuP>

THE CABINET MEETING HEARD AROUND THE WORLD ...

-- **NYT'S JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS:** "Mr. Trump transformed a routine meeting of senior members of his government into a mood-boosting, ego-stroking display of support for himself and his agenda. While the president never explicitly asked to be praised, Mr. Pence set the worshipful tone, and Mr. Trump made it clear he liked what he heard. 'Thank you, Mick,' he told Mick Mulvaney, his budget director. 'Good job,' he told Scott Pruitt, his E.P.A. chief. 'Very good, Daniel,' he said to Dan Coats, the director of national intelligence. ... In a video posted with the tweet, Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, sat at a table with young staff members who, at his prompting, praised his performance on Sunday talk shows and the appearance of his hair. One repeated Mr. Priebus's quotation word for word, prompting the senator and his aides to erupt into laughter." <http://nyti.ms/2tgdudT>

-- **@SenSchumer:** "GREAT meeting today with the best staff in the history of the world!!!" <http://bit.ly/2swimPy>

HOW IT'S PLAYING -- Reuters: "At Trump's Cabinet meeting, flattery is flavor of the day" <http://reut.rs/2tfZHnK> ... **AP:** "Who loves him more? Trump's cabinet members gush at meeting" <http://apne.ws/2rIneCF> ... **WaPo:** "Praise for the chief: Trump's Cabinet tells him it's an 'honor' and 'blessing' to serve" <http://wapo.st/2rlwBXO> ... **Full video** <http://nbcnews.to/2rdiYWa>

-- **@ChrisLu44** (whose birthday was yesterday): "I ran 16 Cabinet meetings during Obama's 1st term. Our Cabinet was never told to sing Obama's praises. He wanted candid advice not adulation"

WELCOME TO WASHINGTON -- "Melania Trump Leaves New York Behind for the White House," by NYT's Maggie Haberman: "Melania Trump will attend a congressional picnic in the final days of June. She will start filling out her roster of aides. She will get her son settled into his new home and, then, in the fall, a new school. And

she will turn attention to the range of issues that a first lady has the ability to affect.

"For the first time since President Trump was inaugurated , his wife is living full time in the White House. She and the couple's 11-year-old son, Barron, left Trump Tower in Manhattan behind over the weekend, a transition that the first lady announced on her husband's favorite medium, Twitter, after it was completed. ...

"Mrs. Trump's immediate focus is likely to be inside the White House , where her husband has become increasingly isolated from his party and even his own staff since his abrupt firing of James B. Comey, the director of the F.B.I. 'She is the president's never-ending barometer of reality, and she delivers candor and honesty blended with selfless love for him and his family in equal doses,' said Thomas J. Barrack Jr., a close friend of the Trumps who has known the first lady since 1998." <http://nyti.ms/2swbS2V>

-- WAPO'S KRISSAH THOMPSON: "Five questions about Melania Trump's move to the White House": "Will Melania Trump keep her husband from sending controversial wee-hours tweets? ... Will she build an advocacy program, such as Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move' or Laura Bush's National Book Festival, or undertake any restoration projects in the White House? ... How will Barron Trump's presence change life in the White House? ... Will Melania Trump engage with D.C.'s social scene? ... How will Melania Trump leave her mark on the job?" <http://wapo.st/2rVvblm>

-- "Barron Trump's 'The Expert' T-shirt sells out at J. Crew," by The Washington Examiner's Leah DePiero: "The T-shirt Barron Trump wore while exiting Marine One with his parents on Sunday as he and first lady Melania Trump officially moved into the White House has sold out on J. Crew as of Monday. The gray cotton ringer T-shirt with the words 'The Expert' in blue lettering gained attention after 11-year-old Barron paired it with dark jeans and sneakers on Sunday. 'We're sorry. This item has been so popular, it has sold out,' J. Crew's website said of the \$29.50 shirt." <http://washex.am/2sndsEH>

IT'S ALL HAPPENING -- "Former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski shopping book - again," by CNN's Oliver Darcy: "Publishers were told to submit offers to Lewandowski's agent, Mel Berger of WME Entertainment, by a Friday deadline ... Berger was expecting to ultimately fetch seven figures for the book deal. It was not clear what Lewandowski's book would be about. A proposal wasn't submitted, likely to avoid details leaking to the public, the source added. Lewandowski previously had an offer from HarperCollins worth \$1.2 million, but lost it over concerns about a nondisclosure agreement he signed during the campaign, Politico reported last June. This time around, however, publishers were told Lewandowski had been able to obtain a waiver of the nondisclosure agreement, one of the sources familiar with the matter said." <http://cnnmon.ie/2rd6Ft5>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- He's meeting with H.R. McMaster, lunching with members of the Senate and then will go to Milwaukee. In Milwaukee he will meet with "Obamacare victims," speak about health care and tour Waukesha County Technical College. He will then hold a roundtable on "workforce development." He'll also speak at a fundraiser for

Gov. Scott Walker before returning to D.C.

VIRGINIANS HEAD TO THE POLLS TODAY -- WAPO: "Just tuning in to Virginia governor's race? We'll help you do your homework" <http://wapo.st/2swFRYR>

THE JUICE ...

--@maggieNYT: "In other non-Mueller news, Ivanka Trump, who excoriated the 'viciousness' of Washington on Fox, made a visit with Conde Nast brass at 1WTC"

-- **SPOTTED: FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER** yesterday on the new Delta LAX to DCA flight in Delta One (first class), watching "Eight Days a Week," the Ron Howard documentary about The Beatles.

-- **PEACOCK UPDATE:** The MSNBC shows "Hardball," "Andrea Mitchell Reports" and "MSNBC Live" with Hallie Jackson have all moved to the NBC studios at 400 North Capitol. Yesterday was the first day in the new studios. They join Greta van Susteren's "For the Record," which has aired from the Capitol Hill location since its inception.

-- **THE NRCC** disclosed another \$833,526 in media spending against Jon Ossoff in Georgia's sixth congressional district.

WARRIORS WIN NBA TITLE -- L.A. TIMES TANIA GANGULI: "'I remember plenty of times throughout my career I continued to just look in the past and look ahead and not stay in the moment,' [MVP Kevin] Durant said. 'In this series I just stayed in the moment. And we did it together. ... You call us a super team, but it's been a lot of super teams that [haven't] worked, and we came together and we continued to just believe in each other and we sacrificed and we're champions now.'" <http://lat.ms/2rds18so>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Mourners light candles at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida on June 12. A gunman opened fire at the nightclub one year ago in the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history, killing 49 people. | Stephen M. Dowell/Orlando Sentinel via AP Photo

NEW BUZZFEED INVESTIGATION (with six bylines) -- **"POISON IN THE SYSTEM":** "The British government is suppressing explosive intelligence that Alexander Perepilichnyy, a financier who exposed a vast financial crime by Russian government officials, was likely assassinated on the direct orders of Vladimir Putin. Perepilichnyy, who faced repeated threats after fleeing to Britain, was found dead outside his home in Surrey after returning from a mysterious trip to Paris in 2012. Despite an expert detecting signs of a fatal plant poison in his stomach, the British police have insisted

there was no evidence of foul play, and Theresa May's government has invoked national security powers to withhold evidence from the inquest into his cause of death - which is ongoing. But an investigation by BuzzFeed News has now obtained fresh evidence that the authorities have deliberately sidelined, and has uncovered how Perepilichnyy spent his last days in Paris." <http://bzfd.it/2tfTF6z>

MORE MCAULIFFE ON ISAAC DOVERE'S 'OFF MESSAGE' -- THROWING SHADE AT HILLARY

-- "We, as a party, need to understand what happened," the Virginia governor told Isaac Doovere in the new Off Message podcast, live today. "My advice would be to Hillary, 'There's enough people that will do that and get that information out.'" McAuliffe says she never asked him to join her PAC. He told Isaac he didn't even know what it was called. Here's the exchange: "What is the name of it?" "Onward Together." "Terrific." "Like 'Stronger Together.'" "Got it," he says. "Very clever." <http://politi.co/2rlFyQF> ... **Listen and Subscribe** <http://apple.co/2nEa7y0>

WHAT WALL STREET IS READING -- "Goldman's Blankfein, Citi's Corbat Duped by Email Prankster," by WSJ's Liz Hoffman and Telis Demos: "The chief executives of Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Citigroup Inc. are the latest bank bosses to be hooked by an email prankster trolling top Wall Street brass, exposing a low-tech gap in banks' cybersecurity armor. Goldman's Lloyd Blankfein and Citigroup's Michael Corbat, as well as Citigroup consumer-banking chief Stephen Bird, responded over the weekend to emails sent by the anonymous prankster masquerading as top executives at the two banks. The hoaxer ... on Sunday published screenshots of the exchanges on Twitter. ... None of the executives disclosed sensitive information in responding to the prankster, but the repeated episodes flag concerns about whether banks have done enough to guard against online threats." <http://on.wsj.com/2swiMW8>

***** **A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** Led by scientists and engineers, POET is a biofuels company built from innovation. POET operates 30 biofuel facilities across eight states & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. Across the country, we support 40,000 renewable energy jobs producing a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. Inside the Beltway, we advocate for pro-biofuel policies to remove barriers to consumer fuel choices with a Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fix, support a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, and open new markets for U.S. exports and trade. We are securing a cleaner future for all of us. We are POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). *****

MEDIAWATCH -- "Facebook Building Feature to Let Users Subscribe to News Publications," by WSJ's Deepa Seetharaman and Lukas Alpert: "Facebook Inc. may soon help its users do something unfamiliar on the platform: pay for news. The social-media giant is building a feature that would allow users to subscribe to publishers directly from the mobile app, according to people familiar with the matter. The feature, long-requested by publishers, is expected to roll out by the end of 2017 ... Facebook [is] leaning toward a metered-payment model, which would allow users to read some articles for free each month before prompting them to pay, three of the people familiar with the matter said." <http://on.wsj.com/2snc4Sy>

-- **L.A. Times national correspondent Nigel Duara** is leaving for a role as a correspondent on HBO's "Vice News Tonight." Duara, also an AP alum, will serve as a national correspondent, beginning June 19.

Playbookers

SPOTTED: HHS Secretary Tom Price drinking a beer at the Nationals game last night cheering on the Braves with some other HHSers. ... Dr. Ben Carson yesterday on a Delta Shuttle from DCA to LGA, seated in Delta Comfort+ seat 7D ... Ivanka at LaGuardia yesterday near the gate for the DCA shuttle (with lots of Secret Service with her) ... Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) talking on his cell-phone yesterday afternoon in the Watergate Hotel library ... Ron Brownstein yesterday catching a foul ball at Nationals Park -- **Doug Heye's Instapic** <http://bit.ly/2snwVVJ> ... Rep. Ami Bera (D-Calif.) sitting at the head of a packed table off the lobby of 20 F Street, NW. ...

... **Ashton Kutcher and Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.)** sharing a stage at the 2017 Rotary Convention in Atlanta to discuss the issue of modern day slavery and the current efforts in curbing human sex trafficking around the world. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2snyH9y> ... <http://bit.ly/2siO6H8> ... Laurel Strategies CEO Alan Fleischmann having breakfast yesterday morning at the Four Seasons with Stedman Graham.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Ed Cash held his semiannual Bipartisan Homeland Security reception last night at Clyde's in Chinatown. The event brings together the homeland security teams from the Bush, Obama and now Trump Administrations. More than 350 guests attended the event and heard remarks from Secretary John Kelly, former Secretary Michael Chertoff and former Deputy Secretary Ali Mayorkas. **Pic of Secretary Kelly addressing attendees** <http://bit.ly/2tgIqDo>

SPOTTED: Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke, DHS chief of staff Kirstjen Nielsen, White House OMB associate director Kathy Kraninger, Admiral Thad Allen, Chad Sweet, DHS assistant secretary for public affairs Jonathan Hoffman, FEMA deputy administrator Dave Grant, White House Military Office director Dab Kern, DC Homeland Security chief Brian Baker, Rich Serino, Christian Marrone, Will Booher, and many more.

SPOTTED at Dave Weigel's book party last night at Black Cat to celebrate "The Show That Never Ends: The Rise and Fall of Prog Rock" -- **\$18.32 on Amazon:** <http://amzn.to/2s5zetB> : Julia Ioffe, Asawin Suebsaeng, Elizabeth Nolan Brown, Wesley Lowery, Olivia Nuzzi, John Hudson, Taylor Lorenz, Ezra Klein, Annie Lowery, Rosie Gray, Carolyn Fiddler, Bob Draper, Paul Kane, Josh Green, Kevin Robillard, Byron Tau, Rebecca Leber, Stephanie Slade, Jesse Walker, Matt Gertz, Peter Suderman, Meghan McArdle, Jim Newell, Tierney Sneed, Brian Beutler, Benjy Sarlin, Hadas Gold, Brendan Karet, Eric Boehm, Igor Bobic, Alyssa Rosenberg, John Tabin, Alex Parker, Eric

Michael Garcia, Betsy Woodruff, Pema Levy, Travis Waldron.

ENGAGED -- Patrick Crowley (of Dayblink Consulting, soon to be getting his MBA at UNC) popped the question on Saturday to AEI senior media associate **Meg Cahill**. "She gladly said yes to her longtime Notre Dame college sweetheart and AEI's communications team looks forward to celebrating the happy couple when they return on our Dupont Circle rooftop!" After getting engaged, the couple then went on an already planned vacation to Puerto Rico. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2swlb35>

TRANSITIONS -- Former Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack is joining the board of directors of Feeding America, which is the nation's largest hunger relief organization with 200 food banks serving every state. <http://politi.co/2rm0K9j> ... **Ashley Pratte** has been hired to be the director of public affairs at The Herald Group; she most recently has been director of media relations and public affairs at the American Legislative Exchange Council. ... **Constance Boozer**, formerly of HFA (Brooklyn), is now Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's director of surrogates and media affairs. She got promoted from within the office, where she's been working since November. ...

... **Marcel Lettre** has joined Lockheed Martin as VP for national security. He previously was under secretary of defense for intelligence and has also worked on the Hill. ... **Emily Hecht-McGowan** is joining the Biden Foundation's team as policy director for equality. She previously was Family Equality Council's chief policy officer. <http://politi.co/2rcVZuF> ... **Ed Murphy**, a former researcher for Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner and the RNC, has joined Prospect Strategic Communications as the opposition-research firm's newest partner. Ed will be based in Chicago, while the firm's other two partners, Kris Anderson and Webber Steinhoff, are based in LA and D.C.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Chris Lu, former deputy secretary of Labor and longtime Obamaworld person who is now at FiscalNote and the Miller Center, turned 51. He celebrated by "cheering on the Nats and toasting birthday-mate George H.W. Bush, whose decency and integrity is sorely missed in the White House right now," per our anonymous birthday tipster ... Michael Pollack, former clerk for Justice Sotomayor and future Cardozo Law professor (hat tip: David Helfenbein) ... **(was Saturday):** Ayesha Rascoe, White House reporter at Reuters (h/t Roberta Rampton)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: WSJ White House reporter **Eli Stokols**, Politico alum, the pride of Irvine, California and erstwhile Mile High resident. How he's celebrating: "Just going out to dinner with my girlfriend, Elena Schneider. I've been told we're going to Rose's." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2sX56AP>

BIRTHDAYS: L.A. Times political writer Seema Mehta ... former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is 73 ... Mike Norton, Arkansan, Truman/Marshall Scholar and former Hill intern ... Katie Biber Chen, Romney GC and Bush 43 alum now general counsel at Thumbtack in SF (h/t Sarah Isgur Flores) ... Jimmy Orr ... John Del Cecato, partner at AKPD Message and Media ... Cathy McLaughlin (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Marissa Shorenstein, SVP of the east region at AT&T, one of the youngest senior

executives in the company's history (h/t Keri Kohler) ... Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) is 7-0 (h/t James Owens) ... Politico's Margaret McGill ... William Lewallen ... Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) is 8-0 ... Leslie Hagar Small ... Neil Bernstein ... Bill Mergner, director at AQN Strategies ... Philip Rosenthal ... NBC alum Morgan Pitt, now an events coordinator at Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville ...

... **Nicole Gelinas**, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a contributing editor to City Journal ... Ryan Rhodes ... WSJ alum Andrew Grossman, now a student at Wharton ... Jenny Eisen Verdery, yoga instructor and former lobbyist at Intel, celebrating 5-0 at Machu Picchu in Peru (h/t Stewart) ... Charlie Nichols is 15 ... Michelle Lee of WaPo's Fact-Checker blog ... NBC4's Eun Yang ... R. Brian Lewis, a good man from Nebraska ... Jim Fellingner, press secretary at Concerned Veterans for America (h/t Rebecca Coffman) ... Kirtan Mehta ... Lauren Mehta ... Sagar Vachhani ... Alex Marino of Civis Analytics ... Andrew Lavigne ... Judge Neil Cohen ... Sarah Hurwitz ... Margaret Shepard, managing director of 1776, celebrating in France (h/t Peter Cherukuri) ... Genger Charles ... Patrick G. Cronin ... Michelle Korsmo ... Patrick McGill is 31 ... Bill Buck is 5-0 ... John Eddy, partner at SourceRock Partners ... Jeff Siegel is 4-0 ... Junheng Li ... Rick Weidman is 71 ... Tony Varona ... Neil Bernstein is 51 ... WTOP's Brian Oliger ... artist Christo is 82 ... Siegfried (Siegfried & Roy) is 78 ... Hannah Storm is 55 ... Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen are 31 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** Led by scientists and engineers, POET is a biofuels company built from innovation. POET operates 30 biofuel facilities across eight states & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. Across the country, we support 40,000 renewable energy jobs producing a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. Inside the Beltway, we advocate for pro-biofuel policies to remove barriers to consumer fuel choices with a Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) fix, support a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, and open new markets for U.S. exports and trade. We are securing a cleaner future for all of us. We are POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). *****

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To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 8:27:09 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Hold off on this b/c The Hill one is wrong and I asked Devin, the reporter to update his story.

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts. Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health

and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

“In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA’s Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city’s drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint’s Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint’s residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town’s drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

“Forgiving Flint’s past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city’s water system over time,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. “Forgiving the city’s debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint’s water system to continue.”

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness “will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns.”

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed

"skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic

National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer,

had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

James Hewitt

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 8/22/2017 10:36:01 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Chevron: PRESIDENT TRUMP'S WAR -- SPOTTED at Sinclair HQ: Laura Ingraham -- TRUMP aides plot immigration deal -- HOW THE TRUMP SONS are running the family biz -- MNUCHIN's wife gets heat for Insta post -- B'DAY: Rich Lowry

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Chevron
08/22/2017 06:33 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Tuesday morning. SIREN: INSIDE THE DEBT-CEILING DRAMA ... THE NATION'S BORROWING LIMIT needs to be lifted in the next month or so, and House and Senate Republicans and the Trump administration have **NO IDEA AND NO PLAN** how it's going to get done, according to sources in each corner of the fight. **ELEMENTS IN THE WHITE HOUSE** have signaled to Hill leaders they believe Congress will pass a clean increase -- lifting the debt cap without other provisions. This will not fly with some conservative members, who want some sort of policy concessions. **HOUSE and SENATE REPUBLICANS** tell us they have not decided on a strategy as of yet. The prevailing theory among GOP aides continues to be that the Senate will pass a clean debt ceiling increase and jam the House with it. That seems risky, and aides are worried.

-- **MITCH MCCONNELL**, yesterday in Kentucky: "There is zero chance -- no chance -- we will not raise the debt ceiling."

-- **FROM A GOP HILL AIDE**: "Leadership has no plan for debt ceiling. Zero specifics on tax reform. We are six weeks away for funding the government and no one has any idea what will happen. Leadership has nothing they've articulated."

THE BOSTON GLOBE'S VICKY MCGRANE -- "Businesses fret over Congress' ability to avoid debt default" <http://bit.ly/2vUBW8X>

NANCY COOK on tax reform: "There is broad consensus, according to five sources familiar with the behind-the-scenes talks, on some of the best ways to pay for cutting both the individual and corporate tax rates. The options include capping the mortgage

interest deduction for homeowners; scrapping people's ability to deduct state and local taxes; and eliminating businesses' ability to deduct interest, while also phasing in so-called full expensing for small businesses that allows them to immediately deduct investments like new equipment or facilities." <http://politi.co/2imiAoC>

ABOUT LAST NIGHT ... PRESIDENT TRUMP'S WAR

-- **NYT's MARK LANDLER and MAGGIE HABERMAN: "Angry Trump Grilled His Generals About Troop Increase, Then Gave In":** "President Trump's skepticism about America's involvement in Afghanistan was no secret to his staff. But his top national security officials were still taken aback at a meeting in the Situation Room on July 19, when an angry Mr. Trump began ripping apart their latest proposal to send thousands of additional American troops to the country. 'We're losing,' the president declared, according to a person who was in the room. The plan, he complained, was vague and open-ended, with no definition of victory. 'What does success look like?' he asked.

"The day before that meeting, Mr. Trump had invited four soldiers who had served in Afghanistan to the White House for lunch. His exchanges with these enlisted men, an official said, left him sober about the prospects for turning around a war that has dragged on for nearly 16 years. He showed up the next day determined to ask hard questions." <http://nyti.ms/2x8hUGr> ... **Video of Trump's speech** <http://bit.ly/2imLhS9>

-- **ELIANA JOHNSON: "How Trump swallowed a bitter Afghanistan pill,"** "The plan - which will maintain an unspecified U.S. troop presence without withdrawal timetables and intensify pressure on Pakistan to crack down on terrorist safe havens - was the product of a months-long strategy review in which the president's national security team talked him out of ending the costly 16-year war. 'It wasn't a debate,' said a senior White House aide. 'It was an attempt to convince the president.' ... If there was a worldview behind the remarks, it was what Trump called a 'principled realism' devoted to rooting out terrorists without building up the countries that host them - a balance between the president's isolationist tendencies and the neoconservative ideology that animated the last Republican administration. 'We are not nation-building again,' Trump said. 'We are killing terrorists.'" <http://politi.co/2wsSVRq>

-- **WAP0'S PHIL RUCKER and BOB COSTA:** "Trump's private deliberations -- detailed in interviews with more than a dozen senior administration officials and outside allies -- revealed a president un-attached to any particular foreign-policy doctrine, but willing to be persuaded as long as he could be seen as a strong and decisive leader. 'This has been many months in the making,' said Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the president. 'The hallmark of leadership is a deliberative process, not an impulsive reaction, and that is precisely the protocol he followed here.'

"Part of that listening included hearing out the military about sharing the burden in the region and getting Pakistan more involved in managing the war. 'When Secretary [Jim] Mattis said this would be a South Asia strategy, that tells you a lot,' said John Bolton, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, referring to recent remarks by the

defense secretary. 'The big issue wasn't land-war tactics. The big issue is Pakistan.' He called Trump's Monday speech the 'defining moment of the Trump policy seven months into the administration.'" <http://wapo.st/2wz7HVS>

-- **POLITICAL REALITY**, via WaPo's Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Anne Gearan:
"Trump's decision is a middle path that does not hew to either of the main foreign policy themes he articulated as a candidate: to stay out of expensive overseas quagmires, and to decisively win any conflict worth entering." <http://wapo.st/2v1XbGZ>

BREITBART HEADLINES: "Trump Reverses Course, Will Send More Troops to Afghanistan" ... "Defends Flip-Flop in Somber Speech" ... "...TRUMP'S 'AMERICA FIRST' BASE UNHAPPY WITH FLIP-FLOP AFGHANISTAN SPEECH..." ... "...HIS MCMASTER'S VOICE: IS TRUMP'S AFGHANISTAN POLICY THAT DIFFERENT FROM OBAMA'S?" <http://bit.ly/1FMhXpk>

-- **SUSAN GLASSER: "America Is Out of Ideas in Afghanistan"**: "President Trump proved one thing beyond the shadow of a doubt in his Afghanistan strategy speech Monday night: After nearly 16 years of fighting America's longest war, there are no new ideas. He called his plan 'dramatically different.' It wasn't. The only thing that seemed a striking change from his two presidential predecessors' approach to the war launched after the attacks of September 11, 2001, was Trump's escalatory rhetoric. He repeatedly vowed to 'win' a conflict that his Defense Secretary James Mattis told Congress recently 'we are not winning' and sharply criticized Afghanistan's neighbor Pakistan, a troublesome ally Trump excoriated for offering 'safe haven' to terrorists." <http://politi.co/2g0WUxg>

-- **WHAT KABUL IS THINKING -- AP**: "Afghanistan's government is applauding President Donald Trump's speech for focusing on needs and conditions instead of timelines. Afghan Ambassador to the U.S. Hamdullah Mohib calls it a '10 out of 10.' He tells The Associated Press by telephone from Kabul that Afghans heard 'exactly what we needed to.' Mohib says critiques of the speech for failing to disclose troop numbers are misguided. He says the focus on numbers detracts from the 'real focus' on conditions and support needed for Afghanistan to succeed and achieve peace.

"The ambassador is also praising Trump for 'breaking the silence' about Pakistan's sheltering of what he calls terrorists. Trump emphasized the need for Pakistan to stop harboring the Taliban. Mohib says Afghanistan has made progress and is committed to pursuing reforms to show it merits continuing help from the U.S." <http://bit.ly/2wzxWVf>

WHAT TRUMP IS WAKING UP TO -- N.Y. POST: "THE TRUMP DOCTRINE: We stay in A'Stan, but 'no nation building'" <http://nyp.st/2algwpl> ... **N.Y. DAILY NEWS**: "MAKE WAR SURGE AGAIN: Trump touts new plan for Afghanistan but won't give strategy" <http://nydn.us/2vUhEMX> ... **ANOTHER DAILY NEWS COVER**: "NOT TOO BRIGHT!: Trump ignores fake news warning, stares at eclipse" ... **N.Y. TIMES**: "IN SPEECH, TRUMP SETS U.S. STRATEGY FOR AFGHAN WAR ... Generals' Warnings Overrode Initial Skepticism ... Expanding Role in a Conflict He Once Called Futile"

<http://nyti.ms/2wzQOKT> ...

... **WAPO**: "Troop increase planned in Afghan war ... Behind the decision: Debate, infighting and stalemate, and finally a bow to the generals ... NEW STRATEGY AFTER INTERNAL REVIEW: Trump previously called conflict a waste of time" ... **WSJ**: "Trump Vows New Afghan Tack: President will boost pressure on Pakistan, avoid telegraphing U.S. military strategy".

-- **ONE THOUGHT**: Trump says he will not detail publicly how many more troops he's sending to Afghanistan. We'll see if that flies with lawmakers when Defense Secretary Jim Mattis heads to Capitol Hill to testify this fall.

***** **A message from Chevron**: When an endangered butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery, we protected the habitat and still plant the only thing they eat-buckwheat. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2ie5v0A> *****

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Navy to Pause Operations, Review Collisions, With 10 Missing: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis responds as storm impedes search for sailors from USS John S. McCain," by WSJ's Nancy Youssef in Washington and Jake Maxwell Watts in Singapore: "The U.S. Navy announced a pause in its global operations and patrols and has begun a broad investigation after the destroyer USS John S. McCain on Monday collided with a merchant vessel, leaving 10 sailors missing, the second such incident in just over two months.

"The response by the U.S. military signals the Navy believes it needs to examine whether there may be institutional problems behind the deadly collisions, and that it may need to retrain some of its personnel in seamanship. Navy Adm. John Richardson, the chief of naval operations, announced 'an operational pause be taken in all of our fleets around the world' -- a move that officials said was rare." <http://on.wsj.com/2g1ZEdN>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- TRUMP is going out west. He'll head to Yuma, Arizona, at noon. He'll go on a tour of "U.S. Customs and Border Protection equipment" and meet with Marines. He'll then head to Phoenix for a campaign rally.

-- **WE HEAR** the White House was working the Hill to drum up support for Trump's trip to the border. The House Freedom Caucus is taking the lead in that effort.

VP MIKE PENCE is accompanying Trump to the rally in Phoenix. **JUST A NOTE**: Pence and Jeff Flake served together in the House and know each other well. If Trump attacks Flake, it will be interesting to see Pence's reaction.

NEXT UP... "GOP on eggshells as Trump storms into Phoenix," by Alex Isenstadt in Phoenix: "President Donald Trump faces a decision on Tuesday evening with profound implications for his already strained relationship with the GOP: Whether to attack a vulnerable Republican senator on his home turf. While White House officials won't say exactly what's on Trump's agenda when he holds a campaign-style rally here, there is a

widespread expectation that he will go after GOP Sen. Jeff Flake, a loud critic of the president who recently published an anti-Trump manifesto, 'Conscience of a Conservative.'

"Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Majority Whip John Cornyn, and [NRSC] Chairman Cory Gardner all declared that Flake had their full support. On Tuesday morning, Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC closely aligned with McConnell, will amp the pressure. The group is set to release a blistering digital ad campaign that targets former Kelli Ward, a conservative former state senator and Flake primary opponent who Trump praised in a tweet last week.

"The ad paints Ward as an extreme figure with 'crazy ideas' who engages in 'embarrassing behavior.' People close to the group describe the offensive as part of a broader effort to show that any Trump-led push to undermine Flake, or any GOP incumbent for that matter, won't go uncontested." <http://politi.co/2vkusZf> ... **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2wzsVmq>

-- **@KFILE:** ".@kelliwardaz's new ad ties Jeff Flake to Obama, but it looks like a photo from bill signing for judge killed in the Giffords attack." <http://bit.ly/2imtLO4>

-- **SEN. JEFF FLAKE (R-ARIZ.)** to Kurtis Lee of the L.A. Times: "What did he think about Trump calling him toxic on Twitter, reporters asked Flake on Monday after speaking to a gathering of local business leaders? 'I don't worry about it at all,' Flake said at an events center here in the suburbs east of Phoenix. Is Trump right in offering aid and comfort to his primary challenger, former state Sen. Kelli Ward? 'That's not my realm. That's somebody else's. I just - I'm running my own campaign. It's going well. And what the president does, that's his prerogative,' Flake said." <http://lat.ms/2vUpgis>

-- **"Arpaio keeping his calendar clear for possible Trump pardon,"** by Ted Hesson: "Former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio said Monday that he doesn't know whether President Donald Trump will grant him a pardon this week -- but he's keeping his calendar open. When asked whether he would be available when Trump visits Phoenix on Tuesday, the 85-year-old former Arizona lawman told POLITICO that 'of course' he would be. ... The former sheriff was convicted in late July of criminal contempt in a racial profiling case and faces a maximum of six months in jail. He is scheduled to be sentenced Oct. 5." <http://politi.co/2x7Z0j7>

BEHIND THE SCENES -- "Trump aides plot big immigration deal - that breaks a campaign promise," by McClatchy's Anita Kumar: "Donald Trump's top aides are pushing him to protect young people brought into the country illegally as children -- and then use the issue as a bargaining chip for a larger immigration deal -- despite the president's campaign vow to deport so-called Dreamers. The White House officials want Trump to strike an ambitious deal with Congress that offers Dreamers protection in exchange for legislation that pays for a border wall and more detention facilities, curbs legal immigration and implements E-verify, an online system that allows businesses to check immigration status, according to a half-dozen people familiar with situation, most

involved with the negotiations.

"The group includes former and current White House chiefs of staff, Reince Priebus and John Kelly, the president's daughter, Ivanka Trump, and her husband, Jared Kushner, who both serve as presidential advisers, they said. Others who have not been as vocal publicly about their stance but are thought to agree include Vice President Mike Pence, who as a congressman worked on a failed immigration deal that called for citizenship, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and Gary Cohn, a Democrat who serves as director of the National Economic Council. ...

"On the other side, a smaller group - including Attorney General Jeff Sessions and his former aides, Stephen Miller, who serves as Trump's senior policy adviser, and Rick Dearborn, White House deputy chief of staff - opposes citizenship, according to sources familiar with the discussions. ... Miller was ordered not to brief the president on the issue in recent months, according to two of the people." <http://bit.ly/2vaiYly>

RYAN FACES LOCAL PEPPERING -- FIRST TOWN HALL SINCE 2015 -- "Ryan faces heat back home in Wisconsin," by Rachael Bade in Racine, Wisconsin: "Paul Ryan was one of most popular Republicans in the country last fall, routing his Democratic challenger and beating back a Donald Trump-inspired primary challenger who trolled him at every turn. Yet there he was, taking flak from discontent constituents at a town hall in Racine on Monday night. ...

"In this small southeast Wisconsin town on Lake Michigan, the speaker fares no better than any other congressional Republican facing unhappy crowds. And in some ways his powerful position in Washington makes it worse because he controls the 240-strong House Republican majority. While the CNN-hosted Ryan town hall was carefully choreographed, packed with about 300 well-behaved attendees, interviews with constituents who have voted for Ryan showed many were disquieted by the GOP's failure to deliver on key campaign promises. ...

"To be sure, Ryan is still extremely popular with Republicans here in the First District. All but one Republican interviewed for this story said he or she would vote for Ryan again, and many praised him as 'honest,' 'tenacious' and 'hard-working.' Some, like Franksville-native Bill Jaeck, even parroted Ryan's talking points about House-passed bills stalled in the Senate -- an echo worthy of Ryan's Washington press conference.

"But there's a sinking feeling among some Ryan supporters that the man they've known and voted in for years is not the superman they'd hoped. 'Being speaker of the House has become a setback. ... It's basically ruined his career for a while, because he's forced to do many unpopular things,' said Marlene Lamberton of Caledonia, a longtime supporter." <http://politi.co/2in2zyq>

INTERESTING BITES FROM RYAN... ON NEW AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY: "I'm pleased with the decision. I'm actually pleased with the way he went about making this

decision. ... So I also think what I heard tonight for the first time -- this is what I wasn't briefed on -- is I think I heard a new Trump strategy, or a doctrine, so to speak. Principled realism I think is how he described it."

-- ON TRUMP'S HANDLING OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE SITUATION: "[I] think it was in New York on an infrastructure press conference, in answer to a question, I think he made comments that were much more morally ambiguous, much more confusing. And I do think he could have done better. I think he needed to do better. I actually think what he did two days ago in commending the peaceful protests against the hate in Boston was a good start. And I think just what I heard, I don't know, 25 minutes ago, was exactly what a president needs to say and what we needed to hear. So I do believe that he messed up in his comments on Tuesday, when it -- it -- it sounded like a moral equivocation, or at the very least moral ambiguity, when we need extreme moral clarity."

-- ON CENSURING TRUMP: "I will not support that. I think that would be -- that would be so counterproductive. If we descend this issue into some partisan hack-fest, into some bickering against each other, and demean it down to some political food fight, what good does that do to unify this country?"

PER BEN WHITE'S MORNING MONEY - "MNUCHIN'S WIFE HITS TURBULENCE -

Lot of buzz on Twitter last night over an Instagram post and reply from Louise Linton, the actress who recently wed Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. The initial post showed Linton and Mnuchin getting off an official plane from a trip to Kentucky. And Linton hashtagged just about everything including her high end ensemble featuring #tomford sunglasses, #roulandmouret pants and #hermesscarf. A commenter on the post said: 'Glad we could pay for your little getaway. #deplorable.' That apparently set Linton off. In a long response she said, among other things: 'Have you given more to the economy than me or my husband. ... I'm pretty sure we paid more taxes toward our day 'trip' than you did. ... Thanks for your passive aggressive nasty comment.' ... Linton's Insta account is now private. Needless to say, saying 'my husband and I are richer than you' is probably not a great move." *The deleted Instapic* <http://bit.ly/2wiD1IK>

THE JUICE ...

-- SPOTTED AT THE SINCLAIR BROADCAST GROUP OFFICES: Laura Ingraham yesterday meeting with David Smith, the company's executive chairman.

-- AMERICAN ACTION NETWORK is doubling down on tax reform. The group is running ads in 34 congressional districts as part of a \$1 million radio campaign running through the end of the month. Six of the districts will be up with a Spanish version. *The ad* <http://bit.ly/2v1U6GX>

MEDIAWATCH - "Ross Levinsohn named new publisher and CEO of Los Angeles Times as top editors ousted," by LA Times' Meg James: "In a dramatic shakeup at the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago-based parent company has installed new leadership and plans to invest more resources in the news organization to move it more

quickly into the digital age. Ross Levinsohn, 54, a veteran media executive who worked at Fox and served as interim chief of Yahoo, was named publisher and chief executive of the 135-year-old news organization. ...

"Jim Kirk, 52, a veteran Chicago news executive, who was publisher and editor of the Chicago Sun-Times until last week, was named interim editor of the storied newspaper. The two men replace Davan Maharaj, who has served as both editor and publisher since March 2016. Maharaj was terminated Monday morning, along with a handful of other senior editors, including Managing Editor Marc Duvoisin, Deputy Managing Editor for Digital Megan Garvey and Assistant Managing Editor of Investigations Matt Doig." <http://lat.ms/2x8gSKU>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump looks up towards the partial solar eclipse while joined by First Lady Melania Trump on the Truman Balcony at the White House on August 21. | Mark Wilson/Getty Images

TOP ECLIPSE TWEETS -- @GeorgeHWBush: "Four generations of family taking in the partial eclipse today. Already looking forward to the next one in Texas in 2024!" <http://bit.ly/2x8w36G> ... **@JoePerticone:** "Most adorable eclipse photo goes to... Jeff Sessions" <http://bit.ly/2vkAPfe> ... **@LaraLeaTrump:** "When you don't have #EclipseGlasses, you find the next best option in a builder's office: #WeldingMask #eclipse2017" <http://bit.ly/2wzuctW> ... **@IvankaTrump:** "Sharing the #Eclipse2017 experience with the President, First Lady & Cabinet Secretaries on the White House Truman Balcony. #STEM #NASA" <http://bit.ly/2wiQ5xM> ... **@ScottGustin:** "International Space Station #Eclipse photobomb via @NASA" <http://bit.ly/2g16gcB> ... **@AP:** "This multiple exposure photo shows the eclipse as it passed over the St. Louis Arch." <http://bit.ly/2xnSBQ4>

-- CLICKERS: CNN -- 22 eclipse pix on one page <http://cnn.it/2x8nhWl> ... **NYT -- 55 reader pix on one page** <http://nyti.ms/2g12Rdz>

JUST POSTED - TRUMP. INC - "Here's How the Trump Brothers Are Running the Family Business: Usually with other people's money, sometimes with dubious partners. Inside the empire, under new management," by Bloomberg Businessweek's Peter Robison and Michael Smith: "Donald Jr., 39, and Eric, 33, ... [have] repeatedly pursued licensing arrangements in which they attach the family name to projects, generating cash without bearing much risk. They have a seemingly ad hoc, opportunistic style that's sometimes led to partnerships with questionable characters, including people barred for securities violations or sued for fraud. And they've walked away, leaving employees, customers, or business partners with the fallout." <https://bloom.bg/2in30cn>

FIRST PERSON - "How I Became Fake News: I witnessed a terrorist attack in Charlottesville. Then the conspiracy theories began," by Brennan Gilmore in POLITICO Magazine: "On Saturday morning I witnessed James Fields smash his car into a crowd of demonstrators, killing Heather Heyer and wounding 19 others. Although I immediately shared the footage with police on the scene, it took me a half hour to decide to post it publicly. ... Desperate to lay blame on anyone besides the alt-right, [conspiracy theorists] seized on these facts to suggest a counter-narrative to the attack, claiming there was no way that someone with my background just happened to be right there to take the video. ...

"They wrote that I was a CIA operative, funded by (choose your own adventure) George Soros, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, the IMF/World Bank, and/or a global Jewish mafia to orchestrate the Charlottesville attack in order to turn the general public against the alt-right. I had staged the attack and then worked with MSNBC and other outlets controlled by the left to spread propaganda. They claimed my ultimate goal was to start a race war that would undermine and then overthrow Donald Trump on behalf of the 'Deep State.' (I'm generalizing here as the theories are widely variant, logically inconsistent and I'm only aware of the small percentage I could be bothered to read.)" <http://politi.co/2v1zgHP>

THE BENCH -- "Dems' first wave of recruits 'outsiders' in 2017 version of Tea Party," by Heidi Przybyla in Murphysboro, Illinois: "Much like the Republican men and women who swept into Washington in the 2010 Tea Party wave, the majority of Democratic candidates are new to state-level or national politics. Unlike the Tea Party, many of these Democrats have a long record of public service. They are former public prosecutors, doctors, CIA operatives and veterans, and they are concentrated in 'heartland' states like Kansas, Iowa, Indiana and Minnesota." <https://usat.ly/2vZRU06>

2020 WATCH ... HAVE AT IT! -- "This House Democrat Lost A Leadership Race To Nancy Pelosi. Now He May Run For President," by BuzzFeed's Alexis Levinson in Manchester, New Hampshire: "It's still more than three years until the next presidential election, and yet here was Ray Buckley -- the chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party for the last decade -- riding shotgun last Wednesday from Boston to Hopkinton, New Hampshire, with Rep. Tim Ryan, the 44-year old Democrat from Youngstown, Ohio. ... last week's New Hampshire visit was not just a reunion of old friends. In June, Ryan campaigned for a Democratic candidate in South Carolina. Next month, he'll make his second trip of the year to Iowa." <http://bzfd.it/2vjYT1W>

-- "Dems prep for Trump primary challengers in 2020," by Gabe Debenedetti: "The [DNC] is conducting full-scale opposition research on multiple Republicans it believes could challenge President Donald Trump for reelection - or are likely to run if he does not. The effort, which began in late spring, covers Vice President Mike Pence, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley and Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse, among others." <http://politi.co/2wzoE2i>

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat-buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video:

<http://politi.co/2ie5v0A> *****

JON MEACHAM in the **NYT**, "**Why Lee Should Go, and Washington Should Stay**":

"'I wonder,' Mr. Trump said, 'is it George Washington next week, and is it Thomas Jefferson the week after? You know, you really have to ask yourself, where does it stop?' 'To me, the answer to Mr. Trump's question begins with a straightforward test: Was the person to whom a monument is erected on public property devoted to the American experiment in liberty and self-government? Washington and Jefferson and Andrew Jackson were. Each owned slaves; each was largely a creature of his time and place on matters of race. Yet each also believed in the transcendent significance of the nation, and each was committed to the journey toward 'a more perfect Union.

"By definition, the Confederate hierarchy fails that test. Those who took up arms against the Union were explicitly attempting to stop the American odyssey. While we should judge each individual on the totality of their lives (defenders of [Robert E.] Lee, for instance, point to his attempts to be a figure of reconciliation after the war), the forces of hate and of exclusion long ago made Confederate imagery their own. Monuments in public places of veneration to those who believed it their duty to fight the Union have no place in the Union of the 21st century - a view with which Lee himself might have agreed. 'I think it wiser,' he wrote in 1866, 'not to keep open the sores of war.'" <http://nyti.ms/2v9rtnh> ... **Meacham's latest for Time, "American Hate, a History"** <http://ti.me/2g1af8Z>

TEVI TROY in **POLITICO Magazine**, "**Why the White House Needs Another**

Bannon: Every GOP president needs an intellectual wrangler. Trump can't succeed without one": "For the past four decades, Republicans have viewed themselves as the party of ideas -- and a crucial part of that self-perception has been having a person inside the White House to serve as a conduit to conservative thinkers. ... Steve Bannon wasn't a traditional liaison to that world, but there's no question he served this function for the Trump administration ... One major difference between Bannon and his predecessors, though, is that he did not appear to be able to get his boss interested in his reading. [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan often recommended books to Nixon, and [Karl] Rove even had a reading contest with Bush." <http://politi.co/2x8h8cK>

ISAAC DOVERE talks with **REV. AL SHARPTON** and **REP. JERRY NADLER (D-N.Y.)**

in the latest "Off Message" podcast. "We're in a poisonous atmosphere that is being increased by the president of the United States. It's like turning on the gas in a room," Sharpton told Dovere. "Any match could lead to an explosion, and we're getting that kind of atmosphere from this president." Nadler, who wrote the censure resolution, told Dovere he thinks Trump should quit, and warned Republicans now not to count on House Democrats for the votes to pass a continuing resolution or raise the debt ceiling, unless both are clean-even if that leads to a shutdown or economic meltdown: "We can't

give in to that kind of blackmail."

As for the Jewish aides who defend Trump, including his daughter and son-in-law Jared Kushner: "I don't care what Jared Kushner said about the fact that Donald Trump loves, loves him and Ivanka and other people," Nadler said. "He was willing to traffic in anti-Semitism. He was willing to use anti-Semitic imagery. And then, when caught up in it, refused to repudiate it, and denied that it was what it clearly was."

<http://politi.co/2v1T6CM>

FUTURE OF NEWS -- "CNN Launches a Daily News Show for Snapchat," by WSJ's Alexandra Bruell: "CNN is launching a daily news show for Snapchat called 'The Update,' the latest reflection of how media companies are stepping up their interest in the mobile messaging platform. The show will include a news roundup that airs at 6 p.m., with updates from CNN's anchors and reporters around the world, said Turner, the network's parent company, in a statement. There will also be breaking news segments. If news breaks after the show, CNN might update the running list of news featured on its show and change the cover photo to reflect the update." <http://on.wsj.com/2wjcgUz>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sean Spicer in his Navy uniform at the Pentagon Monday for reserve duty.

TRANSITIONS - Julie Morse starts next Monday as a producer at "CBS This Morning". She has her last day as a producer for MSNBC Friday.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- OBAMA ALUMNI -- Melissa Nitti, public affairs manager at Google, and **Mark Beatty**, partner at 270 Strategies, got married on Sunday. Pool report: The couple "said their vows ... in Hood River, [Oregon] against the majestic backdrop of Mt. Hood -- the same mountain that welcomed Melissa's great, great grandparents when they made their journey along the Oregon Trail. The bride and groom met on the 2012 Obama for America campaign where Melissa was a member of the media team and Mark served as deputy battleground states director. The happy couple was feted by friends and family -- including proud parents Rick and Jan Nitti and Duane and Elaine Beatty -- who came from around the country to join the celebration."

Pic <http://politi.co/2v27BXn>

SPOTTED: Jeremy Bird (who served as the wedding officiant), best man Stephen Brokaw, Mitch Stewart, Isaac Baker, Kristina Peterson, Betsy Hoover, Lauren Kidwell, Meg Ansara, Lynda Tran, Sara El-Amine, Jeff Gabriel, Greg Schultz, and Chris Wyant, Kelly Norton, Anne Sokolov, Kate Sokolov, and Stephanie Gent, Jessica Santillo, Keith Maley, Niraj Chokshi, Jamie Hill and Stephanie Gunter.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Erik Elam, LD for Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), and **Amy Elam**, events principal at HIS/Markit, on Sunday welcomed their son Everett

Brooks Elam into the world. He's 6 lbs, 9 oz. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2vl64a4>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: National Review editor **Rich Lowry** is 49. He tells us he's "been reading almost exclusively about nationalism lately for a potential book project."

How he got his start in journalism: "I wrote for an alternative conservative publication at UVa called the Virginia Advocate. I still have boxes of old issues that are fun, if wince-inducing, to look back at. I always tell people that I was sophomoric as a first-year -- I was precocious that way.

"My first real journalism job was as a research assistant with Charles Krauthammer. This was back before he was a TV star. Probably the most notable thing I did working for him was inadvertently insert a typo into his Washington Post column at the last minute. I mentioned this at a tribute dinner to Charles a couple of years ago, and merciful and gracious man that he is, he officially forgave me." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2vkl2bL>

BIRTHDAYS: Luke Russert is ageless ... Obama WH alum Jess Allen, a JD candidate at NYU Law, is 28 (hat tip: Rachel Racusen) ... Paul Singer is 73 ... Steve Kroft is 72 ... Morton Dean is 81 ... Jennifer Loven, managing director at Glover Park Group and an AP alum ... Steve Brill, celebrating with a road trip up the coast of Maine (h/t wife Cynthia) ... Tom Edsall is 76 ... HPS alum Sabrina Siddiqui ... Jen Nedeau, head of marketing and comms at Bully Pulpit Interactive ... Robin Wright of the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Wilson International Center ... MSNBC's Steve Kornacki is 38 ... Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) is 43 ... Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-SC) is 53 ... former Rep. Thad McCotter (R-Mich.) ... Chris Smith ... Grazia Salvemini ... Ryan Patmintra ... AP's Nebi Qena is 4-0 ... Ken Farnaso, digital comms at the House Small Business Cmte. and an NRCC alum (h/t Alex Stroman) ... Carolyn Harrold, new AtlanticLIVE director of business development and former SXSW head of programming, celebrating her first birthday in DC since making the move from Austin (h/t Patrick Garrigan) ...

... **Bill Miller**, SVP at the Business Roundtable ... Bill Cortese ... Jim Strader ... Abby Denburg ... Sward Tondoneh ... Bill Turenne Jr. ... Elizabeth Lubben ... Eleanor Strom of Google ... Natalie Apsell ... Sinclair's AnnaMaria Di Pietro ... Selena Strandberg ... Katie Gordon ... Morgan Canup ... Matthew Barnes ... Claire Stein-Ross ... Pema Levy of Mother Jones ... Gigi Sukin, digital editor at Colorado Biz magazine (h/t Gordon Bronson) ... Chad Connelly, RNC's director of faith engagement ... Tori Amos is 54 (h/t Tracy Sefl) ... Nick Mildebrath ... Alex Pellegrino ... Adrian Slater ... Katie Bloodgood ... Nick Greene ... Jordan Goldes ... Rob Borden ... Charlotte Day-Reiss ... former Rep. Bud Cramer (D-Ala.) is 7-0 ... Megan Paulsen ... Chris Pumphrey ... Essence Motley ... Alyssa Palisi ... Mac Flores ... Bristol English ... Julia Rothwax ... Pat Eltman ... Chris Lapetina ... Hailey Arends ... Phoebe Link (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat-buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video:

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From: Block, Molly
Sent: Mon 3/12/2018 1:06:56 PM
Subject: EPA News Highlights 3.12.18

EPA News Highlights 3.12.18

Wall Street Journal: Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics. This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

Politico Morning Energy: Let's Try This Again

The administration will attempt to resolve the current impasse over the Renewable Fuel Standard today, in a meeting with executives from both the biofuel and oil industries, sources tell Pro's Eric Wolff, excluding the elected officials who have been present at the last two gatherings Trump held on the subject. Instead, today's meeting will include Jeff Broin, CEO of POET, who will bring a plan intended to drive increased consumption of ethanol while lowering the cost of Renewable Identification Numbers for two years. Meanwhile, oil refiners will come armed with a report by Charles River Associates arguing in favor of a waiver system to cap the price of biofuel credits.

National News Highlights 3.12.18

ABC News: White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

President Donald Trump has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal commission led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Politico: Republicans Wage 11th-Hour Blitz in Pa. Special Election

Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms. Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

CNBC: Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year. The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

TRUMP TWEETS

Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/doomsday-climate-scenarios-are-a-joke-1520800377>

Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

By Oren Cass, 3/11/18

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics.

This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

The best illustration lies deep in a 2015 [paper](#) published in Nature by professors from Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley. They found that warm countries tended to experience lower economic growth in abnormally warm years, while cold countries experienced higher growth in such years. Applying that relationship to a much warmer world of the future, they concluded that unmitigated climate change would likely reduce global GDP by more than 20% from what it otherwise would reach by century's end.

That is roughly an order of magnitude higher than prior estimates, and it has received widespread media attention. But it is as preposterous as it is stunning.

While the world economy stagnates, the model projects, cold countries will achieve almost unimaginable wealth. Iceland supposedly will achieve annual per capita income of \$1.5 million by 2100, more than double that of any other country except Finland (\$860,000). Mongolia, which currently ranks 118th in per capita income, is supposed to rise to seventh, at which point the average Mongolian will earn four times as much as the average American. Canada's economy becomes seven times as large as China's.

The technical term to describe this analysis is "silly." Obviously, the relationship posited between temperature and growth has little to do with reality.

Sadly, this paper represents the norm. Last fall the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a [summary](#) of existing research on future climate costs for the United States. As I show in a new [report](#) published by the Manhattan Institute, a small set of studies dominate this research. They reach their imposing dollar figures by refusing, like the Nature study, to consider how society will evolve and adapt.

One Environmental Protection Agency study estimates the potential increase in extreme-temperature deaths by looking at city-specific effects. It assumes that a day counting as

unusually hot for some city in 2000 will cause a similar mortality increase in that city in 2100, even if climate change makes it no longer unusual.

The result is a projection that a hot day will kill massive numbers in Northern cities by 2100—though such temperatures are already routine at lower latitudes with no such ill effects. Pittsburgh’s extreme-temperature mortality rate is supposed to be 75 times as high in 2100 as that of Phoenix in 2000, though Pittsburgh will not be as hot then as Phoenix was a century earlier.

But if Pittsburgh’s climate steadily warms over the coming century, it will not react to a 100-degree day in 2100 the same way it did in 2000. Even if it didn’t warm, we should assume that economic and technological advancement will make the city and its residents more resilient to heat than they are today.

Another analysis relied on by GAO, taking its own approach to extreme-temperature deaths, inadvertently makes this point—then proceeds to ignore it. The “American Climate Prospectus” attempts to combine two different studies that consider whether very hot days—during which the average temperature is above 90 degrees—have higher mortality than days with moderate temperatures. The first of these studies used data from 1968–2002 and found that the answer was yes.

But a second study, published later by some of the same authors, looked at how this relationship had changed over time. Here they found that the mortality rate on hot days had declined precipitously. The adoption of air-conditioning, they concluded, “has positioned the United States to be well adapted to the high-temperature-related mortality impacts of climate change.”

Incredibly, even though overlapping authors had contributed to both of these studies, and one of them was also a reviewer of the “Prospectus” analysis, the “Prospectus” ignored the declining-mortality trend and claimed climate change would kill tens of thousands annually.

This question of adaptation, and how to account for a future different from the present, is not an esoteric detail for science and economics. It is fundamental to understanding the challenge posed by climate change.

If you imagine society is static and incapable of innovation, the prospect of climate change must be terrifying—all of humanity paralyzed like Michelle Pfeiffer in “What Lies Beneath,” watching the bathtub fill slowly with water.

But horror movies are not reality. The 1960s overpopulation scare made sense, assuming that society would not find more productive ways to farm. The 1970s fear of impending limits to growth made sense, assuming that society could not expand a finite supply of resources. Those doomsday predictions failed because the underlying assumption was mistaken. Society is constantly adapting to all sorts of changes. If a projection of climate-change cost ignores adaptation, we can safely ignore it.

Politico: Morning Energy

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/zinke-and-perrys-very-busy-week-128220>

Let's Try This Again

By Kelsey Tamborrino, 3/12/18

The administration will attempt to resolve the current impasse over the Renewable Fuel Standard today, in a meeting with executives from both the biofuel and oil industries, sources tell Pro's Eric Wolff, excluding the elected officials who have been present at the last two gatherings Trump held on the subject. Instead, today's meeting will include Jeff Broin, CEO of POET, who will bring a plan intended to drive increased consumption of ethanol while lowering the cost of Renewable Identification Numbers for two years. Meanwhile, oil refiners will come armed with a report by Charles River Associates arguing in favor of a waiver system to cap the price of biofuel credits.

Corn makes some noise: Reps. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.), Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), Kristi Noem (R-S.D.), and Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa), the co-chairs of the Congressional Biofuels Caucus, sent Trump a letter Friday asking him to "reject any changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard that would hurt the farm economy." Ethanol supporters also held a rally in Nevada, Iowa this weekend aimed at sending a message to Trump to back the RFS.

ABC News

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/white-house-school-safety-proposal-focus-empowering-states/story?id=53673052>

White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

By Jordyn Phelps, 3/12/18

President Donald Trump has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal

commission led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The only pieces of legislation Trump is set to endorse formally are two bills he's previously backed: The FIX NICS Bill, which calls for making improvements to the nation's background check system, and the STOP School Violence Act, which would provide grants to states in developing anti-school-violence plans. The White House has previously expressed support for both measures.

Additionally, the White House is calling for an audit and review of the FBI tip line, directing the Department of Justice to partner with willing states to train qualified school personnel and calling for a review of expanding mental-health programs and patient-privacy laws.

The White House is also calling on states to pass risk-protection orders that allow law enforcement to remove firearms from individuals who are a demonstrated threat to themselves or others and temporarily prevent those individuals from buying new firearms.

These proposals will be released with little fanfare on Monday, with no specific White House event planned around the occasion.

While Trump has previously suggested he supports universal background checks on all firearm purchases, a senior official explained that the president is supporting the narrow FIX NICS Bill for now is a matter of practicality.

"The president wants to improve our background check system -- we want to act now, we don't want to wait," a senior administration official said. "We believe that this legislation is important and useful in improving the background check system and can pass virtually immediately if there's not obstruction in Congress."

As for the potential for further action on background checks, the official said "that's something we'll discuss in the commission."

The president had also previously called for raising the minimum age on purchasing firearms to 21 across the board, something the NRA strongly opposes.

While the president has in recent weeks suggested other politicians have not pushed for changing the minimum age out of fear for the powerful gun lobby, Trump now is similarly backing down. The administration said that's a debate for states and the DeVos-led commission.

"Regarding the age, that's obviously a state-based discussion that's going on right now, and that's something that the commission will look at, get information from the states about what they're considering, and what's impactful and useful," a senior official said.

As for the president's call to arm school personnel, the only action the White House is formally expected to endorse Monday is the Justice Department's working with states to help interested localities in arming and training qualified individuals, with no details yet provided on how such programs will be funded.

"The DOJ ... will provide assistance to states to help them partner with state and local law enforcement to provide appropriate firearms training, and other training with appropriate school personnel," a senior official said. "Those are capable of happening today."

Devos insisted on a call with reporters that the time for talk and no action is over.

"We've had to talk about this topic way too much over the years," she said. "And there's been a lot of talk in the past but very little action. I have to give credits to the students in their courage and consistent call for action."

But the commission she will chair is operating without a deadline, even as a senior administration official insists it will move with "deliberate speed" and "impatience" from its leader to offer real solutions.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/12/pennsylvania-special-election-lamb-saccone-454728>

Republicans Wage 11th-Hour Blitz in Pa. Special Election

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt, 3/12/18

Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multi-million-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly two-to-one, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here, cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from four percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close. "Our people get out, we win, and there's no problem."

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for its coverage of the race, saying it had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring his accomplishments.

"The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin resume and trying to make it sound like it's something big, when I have a big resume that they to try and scrunch down and don't say anything about," he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a “really good person,” told his supporters to “go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy,” and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb’s support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb’s pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

“Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions,” say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he “abandoned PA labor unions,” who were “outraged” by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb “supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment.”

As they funneled into Trump’s rally on Saturday, some of the president’s supporters conceded they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative seat.

“I’ve seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood,” said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

“A lot of people I’ve heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas,” she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump’s 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president’s loyalists questioned whether Trump should skip the campaign event, worried that he’d take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

“If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president,” said David Urban, who oversaw Trump’s 2016 campaign in the state. “It reminds me of, ‘Heads I lose, tails you win.’”

CNBC

<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/11/elon-musk-says-mars-spaceship-will-be-ready-for-short-trips-by-first-half-of-2019.html>

Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

By Michelle Castillo, 3/11/18

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year.

The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

Musk held a surprise question and answer session at the annual technology and culture festival in Austin, Texas on Sunday. The billionaire told attendees that "we are building the first Mars, or interplanetary ship, and I think we'll be able to short trips, flights by first half of next year."

Mindful of elevating expectations too high, Musk hedged a bit. "Although sometimes, my timelines are a little, you know..." he said to laughter.

SpaceX's BFR rocket system is expected to have capabilities for interplanetary travel, and be fully reusable. A flight will cost less than the initial Falcon 1 flights, which Musk pegged in the \$5 to \$6 million range.

He hopes if BFR launches, others will believe Mars travel is possible, and follow suit.

"The biggest thing that would be helpful is just general support and encouragement and goodwill," Musk said. "I think once we build it we'll have a point of proof something that other companies and countries can go and do. They certainly don't think it's possible, but if we do they'll up their game."

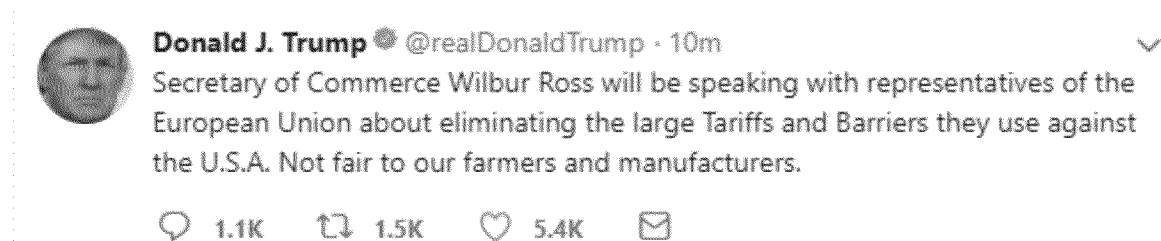
In the immediate term, Mars will need Glass domes, a power station, and an assortment of basic living fundamentals, he cautioned. After the infrastructure is complete, "then really the explosion of entrepreneurial opportunity [will begin], because Mars will need everything from iron foundries to pizza joints," he said.

In a wide-ranging series of remarks, Musk regaled the audience with anecdotes about several of his other ventures, including Tesla and the Boring Company, with the billionaire joking he

tweets about the latter more than he actually spends time working on it.

He also raised eyebrows when asked the source of his inspiration, citing iconic entertainer Fred Astaire and irascible hip-hop artist Kanye West.

TRUMP TWEETS



To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 8:13:23 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17
EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17 .docx

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From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts. Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking

of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for

climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that is has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

“In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

“Forgiving Flint’s past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city’s water system over time,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. “Forgiving the city’s debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint’s water system to continue.”

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness “will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns.”

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already

hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below

2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dloughy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist

representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the

market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

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EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts. Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower

than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO2 is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon

dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

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The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting

regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the

government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

'Behind the Scenes'

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 8/21/2017 5:07:52 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Chevron: REPUBLICAN committees paid over \$1 million to TRUMP companies -- PUTIN names new Russian ambassador to U.S. -- Former Sputnik reporter dishes on his time at a 'Russian propaganda network'

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Chevron

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

BREAKING -- "NEW YORK (AP) - POLL ALERT: Alabama is No. 1 in preseason Top 25 for 2nd straight season, followed by Ohio St, Florida St, USC, Clemson."

Good Monday afternoon and happy eclipse day. The eclipse will peak and cover 81 percent of the sun at 2:42 p.m. in Washington, according to Capital Weather Gang (<http://wapo.st/2fZm4fT>). Seriously, do NOT stare directly into the sun. **THE PRESIDENT** will watch the eclipse from the Truman Balcony with the first lady, per pooler Ben Jacobs of The Guardian.

AP//BARCELONA -- "Police shoot and kill Barcelona van attacker": "Regional police in Spain have confirmed that fugitive Barcelona van suspect Younes Abouyaaqoub has been shot dead in a small town outside the city. Police say he wore what appeared to be an explosives belt when he was shot in Subirats, 45 kilometers (28 miles) west of Barcelona.

"Abouyaaqoub had been the focus of an intense manhunt after authorities say he used a van to mow down pedestrians in Barcelona's famous Las Ramblas promenade on Thursday, killing 13 people and injuring over 120. Police also say he stabbed a driver to death and hijacked his car Thursday night in his getaway." <http://bit.ly/2fZPzht>

SPEAKER PAUL RYAN takes it a step further in a new Facebook post entitled **"Let There Be No Confusion":** "[W]e all need to make clear there is no moral relativism when it comes to neo-Nazis. We cannot allow the slightest ambiguity on such a fundamental question." <http://bit.ly/2wgLrjW>

-- BREAKING IN THE PAST HOUR: House Republicans held a conference call to discuss the fall agenda. The leadership and top appropriators discussed the eight remaining spending bills that need to be cleared before the end of September. **HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP STEVE SCALISE** was on today's members-only conference call. He thanked his No. 2 whip, Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, for his help after the shooting. Scalise is still in rehab and his return will depend on doctors' advice.

ALMOST A TREND -- @Sarah_Boxer: ".@HallieJackson just asked @SenatorCollins if Trump will be GOP nominee in 2020. Collins: 'It's too difficult to say'" ...

-- ROLL CALL's JONATHAN ALLEN: "On Friday morning, I sent a note to Corker's office asking whether he would support Trump for renomination in 2020. 'One thing your boss didn't address to my knowledge is whether he supports President Trump for renomination in 2020,' I wrote. 'Since the president's re-election campaign is up and running, and in light of Sen Corker's concerns about the president's stability, will he weigh in on Trump for re-nomination?' And here's what I got back from Corker's communications director, Micah Johnson: 'I don't have anything to add to the senator's comments yesterday.'" <http://bit.ly/2iiYTxB>

A WARNING TO THE PRESIDENT -- ARIZONA REPUBLIC EDITORIAL: Convicted former Sheriff Joe Arpaio "is a lightning rod. Always has been. He was finally defeated in the last election and recently convicted of criminal contempt of court for ignoring a court order to stop racially profiling Latinos. ... Arpaio remains popular with Trump's core supporters, and the president may want to placate them after Bannon's departure. But pardoning Arpaio would permanently stain this presidency.

"It would define Trump as a president who has little regard for the judicial system and less respect for the need to hold law enforcement accountable for violations of minorities' rights. It would be a clear insult to those who patiently used the legal system to hold an unjust sheriff accountable. It would also represent a missed opportunity for Trump to begin realigning his presidency to reflect a mature view of what this country needs." <http://bit.ly/2v7scWf>

PUTIN'S NEW MAN IN AMERICA -- "Putin appoints new Russian ambassador to US," from the AP: "The Kremlin said on Monday Putin has replaced Sergei Kislyak, whose tenure ended in July, with Anatoly Antonov, a deputy foreign minister and former deputy defense minister seen as a hardliner regarding the U.S. The outgoing ambassador played a prominent role the controversy over Russia's possible involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election." <http://bit.ly/2uYxBD2>

AFTERNOON READ -- "A Most American Terrorist: The Making of Dylann Roof," by Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah in GQ: "I had come to Charleston intending to write about them, the nine people who were gone. But from gavel to gavel, as I listened to the testimony of the survivors and family members, often the only thing I could focus on, and what would keep me up most nights while I was there, was the magnitude of Dylann Roof's silence, his refusal to even look up, to ever explain why he did what he had done. Over and over again, without even bothering to open his mouth, Roof reminded us that he did not have to answer to anyone. He did not have to dignify our questions with a response or explain anything at all to the people whose relatives he had maimed and murdered. Roof was safeguarded by his knowledge that white American terrorism is never waterboarded for answers, it is never twisted out for meaning, we never identify its 'handlers,' and we could not force him to do a thing. He remained inscrutable. He

remained in control, just the way he wanted to be.

"And so, after weeks in the courtroom, and shortly before Dylann Roof was asked to stand and listen to his sentence, I decided that if he would not tell us his story, then I would. Which is why I left Charleston, the site of his crime, and headed inland to Richland County, to Columbia, South Carolina-to find the people who knew him, to see where Roof was born and raised. To try to understand the place where he wasted 21 years of a life until he committed an act so heinous that he became the first person sentenced to die for a federal hate crime in the entire history of the United States of America." <http://bit.ly/2uYPIOA>

***** **A message from Chevron:** We're piloting a program that uses drones to keep an eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE -- @realDonaldTrump at 9:27 a.m.: "Jerry Falwell of Liberty University was fantastic on @foxandfriends. The Fake News should listen to what he had to say. Thanks Jerry!" ... **at 9:32 a.m.**, quote tweeting a supporter bashing the media: "Thank you, the very dishonest Fake News Media is out of control!"

-- **EVANGELICAL** leaders like Falwell have been some of the few conservatives who have publicly supported Trump post-Charlottesville.

BAD NEWS FOR ANTI-VAXXERS -- "As White House appoints pro-vaccine officials, plan for safety commission appears stalled," by Stat News' Helen Branswell: "Robert Kennedy Jr., the environmental activist and leading vaccine skeptic, says that it has been months since he has talked with White House officials about chairing a vaccine safety commission -- and that the idea of such a panel may no longer be under consideration. 'I've had no discussions specifically about the vaccine safety commission, probably since February,' Kennedy told STAT. 'You'd have to ask the White House. It may be that it's evolved.' Kennedy said, however, he has met with a series of top administration officials about vaccine safety since Trump took office, including officials at the upper ranks of the Food and Drug Administration and National Institutes of Health. He said those meetings took place at the request of the White House.

"A White House spokesman, asked about the vaccine safety commission, said there were no announcements to make at this time. He declined to comment on whether the White House had arranged meetings for Kennedy. Other officials confirmed that Kennedy had met with agency leaders, but emphasized that U.S. health officials strongly believe in the safety and efficacy of vaccines." <http://bit.ly/2uYjhKN>

TRUMP INC. -- "Republican committees have paid nearly \$1.3 million to Trump-owned entities this year," by WaPo's Matea Gold and Anu Narayanswamy: "The [RNC] paid the Trump International Hotel in Washington \$122,000 last month after the party held a lavish fundraiser at the venue in June, the latest example of how GOP

political committees are generating a steady income stream for President Trump's private business, new [FEC] records show.

"At least 25 congressional campaigns, state parties and the Republican Governors Association have together spent more than \$473,000 at Trump hotels or golf resorts this year, according to a Washington Post analysis of campaign finance filings. Trump's companies collected an additional \$793,000 from the RNC and the president's campaign committee, some of which included payments for rent and legal consulting." <http://wapo.st/2uZ3PxJ>

-- **"Which charities have canceled galas at Mar-a-Lago Club? How much money is at stake? Catch up on the story with our Q&A,"** by WaPo's David Fahrenthold and Drew Harwell: "In all, 15. That includes 11 charities that had planned galas or other large dinner events. These are the most important events of Palm Beach's traditional winter 'season,' when wealthy people from colder climes gather for five months of gala balls, golf, croquet lessons, sequins and pastel fabrics. Some of the biggest charity galas can attract 600 people or more, and raise more than \$1.5 million in an evening." <http://wapo.st/2x12f6b>

BACK IN IT -- "Ed Perlmutter changes course and will run for re-election to Congress," by The Denver Post's Mark Matthews <http://dpo.st/2fZ0hov>

MEDIAWATCH -- "My Life at a Russian Propaganda Network," by former Sputnik reporter Andrew Feinberg in POLITICO Magazine: "In practice, Sputnik's mission statement -- 'Telling the Untold' -- means that Sputnik's content should reflect the Russian side of any news story, whether it lines up with reality or not. When it came to the issue of Crimea (which has been occupied by Russian-backed troops since 2014), we were never to write anything on the subject that didn't include language noting that 90 percent of Crimea residents voted in a referendum to rejoin Russia. Of course, when I'd include details of the tanks and armed men that lined the streets while the people of Crimea voted in that referendum, it would be removed from the story before it went live. When asking about Ukraine, I'd based the premise of my question on the reality of the situation, and the pushback, as I interpreted it, was swift.

"On Monday -- our next day back in the office -- I received an email from [editor Peter] Martinichev ordering me to clear any future questions I intended to ask at the White House with my editors, 'so that everyone is on the same page' That is, he instructed me, if my editors didn't have a specific question they wanted me to ask. My question 'should never be a surprise,' he wrote. 'We also need emergency questions in case [somebody] asks the same before us.'" <http://politi.co/2uYDbVO>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Christie out of the running for sports radio job -- California Republicans face fire over climate change <http://politi.co/2fYOxm7>

JPMORGAN CHASE has pledged \$1 million to be split between the Southern Poverty Law Center and Anti-Defamation League. The company will also "launch a special

campaign to match two-for-one our employees' donations to a wide range of human and civil rights organizations, up to an additional \$1 million." **Read the letter from Peter Scher** <http://politi.co/2uYsQcz>

FIRST PERSON - "This Is How Sexism Works in Silicon Valley: My lawsuit failed. Others won't," by Ellen Pao in N.Y. Mag, in an excerpted from her new book "Reset": "I had been working for six years at the Silicon Valley firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers as a junior partner and chief of staff for managing partner John Doerr. ... One day, I was part of a small group flying from San Francisco to New York on the private jet of another managing partner, Ted Schlein. ... Once we were airborne, the [tech] CEO, who'd brought along a few bottles of wine, started bragging about meeting Jenna Jameson, talking about her career as the world's greatest porn star and how he had taken a photo with her at the Playboy Mansion. ...

"Then the CEO switched topics. To sex workers. He asked Ted what kind of 'girls' he liked. Ted said that he preferred white girls - Eastern European, to be specific. Eventually we all moved to the couch for a working session to help the tech CEO; he was trying to recruit a woman to his all-male board. I suggested Marissa Mayer, but the CEO looked at me and dismissively said, 'Nah, too controversial.' Then he grinned at Ted and added, 'Though I would let her join the board because she's hot.' ...

"Seven months later, I would sue Kleiner Perkins for sexual harassment and discrimination in a widely publicized case in which I was often cast as the villain - incompetent, greedy, aggressive, and cold. My husband and I were both dragged through the mud, our privacy destroyed. For a long time I didn't challenge those stories, because I wasn't ready to talk about my experience in detail. Now I am. ... People in the venture world spoke fondly about the early shenanigans at big companies. A friend told me how he sublet office space to Facebook, only to find people having sex there on the floor of the main public area. They wanted to see if the Reactrix -- an interactive floor display hooked up to light sensors -- would enhance their experience."

<http://bit.ly/2vQTEdo>

SPOTTED -- American University President Sylvia Burwell walking on 49th Street ... Tom Daschle running by the Four Seasons this morning ... Lawfare's Ben Wittes and Susan Hennessy sitting at a table at Java House this morning.

TRANSITIONS -- The House Republican Conference announced a series of promotions and hires on their digital team. **Katelyn Brantley** was promoted to digital director, **Elizabeth Butz** was hired as digital communication strategist and **Annie Richardson** joined as a digital assistant earlier this year.

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

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CBS NEWS' "FACE THE NATION" INTERVIEW WITH SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC)

GRAHAM SAYS PRESIDENT TRUMP IS GETTING IN THE WAY OF HIS OWN AGENDA:

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Here's what I would say. The president got elected by being a fighter, a disruptor. People wanted him to come to Washington and change the place, turn it upside down. I've gotten to know the president better. I like him. He's got a good agenda.

But here's the question. Can you be a street fighter on all things all the time and still be a good president? My advice to the president is every day you're talking about Jim Comey and not the American people and their needs and their desires, their hopes and their dreams, you're making a mistake.

JOHN DICKERSON: Is he getting in the way of his own agenda?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Yeah, totally. At the end of the day, he's got a good agenda. But this does get in the way of it. So, the hearing was pretty good. No collusion with the Russians yet. I don't think obstruction of justice exists here. But every time you tweet about Comey, it's almost like the wait for the next wrestling match between Comey and Trump. It should be about what can Donald Trump do to help the lives of the American people, and sort of get out of the way here.

GRAHAM SAYS IT'S "FRUSTRATING" THAT TRUMP MAY BE FIRST PRESIDENT TO "GO DOWN" BECAUSE HE CANNOT STOP INAPPROPRIATELY TALKING ABOUT INVESTIGATION

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, I think it was true that he's not under investigation for colluding with the Russians, and I don't think what was said amounts to obstruction of justice. Now, what the president did was inappropriate. But here's what's so frustrating for Republicans like me.

You may be the first president in history to go down because you can't stop

inappropriately talking about an investigation that if you just were quiet, would clear you.

**GRAHAM CALLS ON FORMER AG LYNCH AND AG SESSIONS
TO TESTIFY BEFORE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

LINDSEY GRAHAM: You had Comey suggest that the current U.S. attorney general and the former attorney general were playing politics with the investigation.

Lynch and Sessions. That needs to be in our committee. Let me tell you this, to the American people. If the attorney general's office has become a political office, that's bad for us all. So I want to get to the bottom of that, and it should be in judiciary.

...
JOHN DICKERSON: So since, we'll stay in the past here a for moment, move into the present. So you would have former attorney general Loretta Lynch come before the judiciary committee--

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Absolutely.

JOHN DICKERSON:--to answer for these questions about--

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Absolutely. And Sessions, too. And, you know, I think it's inappropriate for the president to testify publicly. But if you're so obsessed about-- and I know you're frustrated. He doesn't believe he did anything wrong with the Russians, and I tend to believe him. He can't collude with his own government. Why do you think he's colluding with the Russians?

**GRAHAM TO TRUMP: YOU'RE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY HERE,
MR. PRESIDENT**

JOHN DICKERSON: The RNC chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel, said that the congressional investigations into this question of collusion should go away. They're a fishing expedition. What's your response to that?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: That's not your, none of your business. We're going to do what we think is best. The Russians interfered in our election. They're doing it all over the world. No evidence yet that the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians. I don't believe the president colluded with the Russians, just because of the way he behaves.

There's zero evidence that President Trump did anything wrong with the Russians. There's overwhelming evidence that Russia is trying to destroy democracy here and abroad. And if you forgive and forget with Putin, you're going to get more of the same and you're going to entice Iran and China to come in 2018 and 2020.

So to any Republican who believes Russia didn't do it, you're wrong. To any Democrat who wants to impeach President Trump because of Russia, you're wrong. All I can say is there's a lynch mob mentality about the Trump administration in the press. They're about as fair as a lynch mob. But these tweets that he does feeds that lynch mob. You're your own worst enemy here, Mr. President. Knock it off.

Read more [here](#) and below.

*****SEE BELOW FOR A RUSH TRANSCRIPT*****

JOHN DICKERSON: And we start with our first guest this morning, Senator Lindsey Graham. Welcome, Senator.

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Thank you--

JOHN DICKERSON: Let me ask you, the president was called a liar by Mr. Comey. The president today has called Mr. Comey a coward. Where are we with this?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: More like a wrestling match than anything else. Here's what I would say. The president got elected by being a fighter, a disruptor. People wanted him to come to Washington and change the place, turn it upside down. I've gotten to know the president better. I like him. He's got a good agenda.

But here's the question. Can you be a street fighter on all things all the time and still be a good president? My advice to the president is every day you're talking about Jim Comey and not the American people and their needs and their desires, their hopes and their dreams, you're making a mistake.

JOHN DICKERSON: Is he getting in the way of his own agenda?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Yeah, totally. At the end of the day, he's got a good agenda. But this does get in the way of it. So, the hearing was pretty good. No collusion with the Russians yet. I don't think obstruction of justice exists here. But every time you tweet about Comey, it's almost like the wait for the next wrestling match between Comey and Trump. It should be about what can Donald Trump do to help the lives of the American people, and sort of get out of the way here.

JOHN DICKERSON: Do you think the president was vindicated? He thought he was vindicated--

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, I think it was true that he's not under investigation for colluding with the Russians, and I don't think what was said amounts to obstruction of justice. Now, what the president did was inappropriate. But here's what's so frustrating for Republicans like me.

You may be the first president in history to go down because you can't stop inappropriately talking about an investigation that if you just were quiet, would clear you. It's frustrating for me to want to help a man who I think will do big things no other Republican would do, like immigration.

Believe it or not, I think Donald Trump may deliver us from a broken immigration system. This is not helping. This should be in the judiciary committee. I heard Dianne Feinstein on the show earlier today. You had Comey suggest that the current U.S. attorney general and the former attorney general were playing politics with the investigation.

Lynch and Sessions. That needs to be in our committee. Let me tell you this, to the American people. If the attorney general's office has become a political office, that's bad for us all. So I want to get to the bottom of that, and it should be in judiciary.

JOHN DICKERSON: What do you want to know from Attorney General Sessions?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, I want to know, is it true what Comey said? Did you create an atmosphere there that people believed that you could not fairly render judgment on the president's interactions with Comey? I want to hear from Loretta

Lynch, did you say, "Please call it a matter, not an investigation."?

And I want Comey to come to our committee, because I know on two separate occasions, he has told members of the House and the Senate that the main reason he jumped into the election last year and took over the job of attorney general is because he believed there were emails between the Democratic National Committee and the Department of Justice that compromised the Department of Justice, and he thought the Russians were going to release these emails. That's why he jumped in and took over Loretta Lynch's job. I want to know, is that true?

JOHN DICKERSON: Well, now, though, that email, there's been some reporting that that was a fake email, or doctored--

LINDSEY GRAHAM: When he told the House and Senate as late--as early as a month ago, he never mentioned it was fake. I don't know if it's fake or not. But the F.B.I. called me about this, John, and said that they wanted to brief me because I've got some of this wrong.

I saw the Washington Post story. I doubt if it's fake. Maybe it is. But I don't want to be briefed by myself. I want Democrats and Republicans on the judiciary to be briefed together. Our committee has been together and we're going to stay together.

JOHN DICKERSON: So since, we'll stay in the past here a for moment, move into the present. So you would have former attorney general Loretta Lynch come before the judiciary committee--

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Absolutely.

JOHN DICKERSON:--to answer for these questions about--

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Absolutely. And Sessions, too. And, you know, I think it's inappropriate for the president to testify publicly. But if you're so obsessed about--and I know you're frustrated. He doesn't believe he did anything wrong with the Russians, and I tend to believe him. He can't collude with his own government. Why do you think he's colluding with the Russians?

So there's a part of this that genuinely frustrates the president. But Mr. President, let's don't make a circus out of your presidency. If you want to come to the judiciary committee and testify under oath, we'll put Comey right by you. It'd be the highest-rated TV show in the history of the world, but it's not good for our democracy.

JOHN DICKERSON: Isn't the challenge to the president not the collusion question, but the interference question? And wouldn't that be the tough questions for him?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: So here's what I think. I think the president believes that if we pursue how Russia interfered with the election, we're suggesting he did not win fairly. I see no evidence of the president's campaign colluding with the Russians. I see all kind of evidence of the Russians trying to destroy our election and destroy democracy at the world.

There will be a bill passed this coming week to punish Russia for interfering in our elections. They hacked into the DNC. Podesta's emails, it was the Russians.

They're providing arms to the Taliban to kill American soldiers. They colluded with Assad so he could keep his chemical weapons.

And I think they were complicit in the attack of chemical weapons by Assad on children in Syria. We're going to punish the Russians. Any member of the Congress who doesn't want to punish Russia for what they've done is betraying democracy. And if the president doesn't sign this bill to punish Russia, he would be betraying democracy.

JOHN DICKERSON: What do you think he'll do?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: I think he'll sign it. And if he doesn't sign it, we're going to override his veto. Mr. President, the Russians did this. They're doing it all over the world. They're providing arms to the Taliban to kill our soldiers. You're the commander in chief. You need to stand up to Russia. We're never going to reset our relationship with Russia until we punish them for trying to destroy democracy. And that starts with more sanctions.

JOHN DICKERSON: The RNC chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel, said that the congressional investigations into this question of collusion should go away. They're a fishing expedition. What's your response to that?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: That's not your, none of your business. We're going to do what we think is best. The Russians interfered in our election. They're doing it all over the world. No evidence yet that the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians. I don't believe the president colluded with the Russians, just because of the way he behaves.

There's zero evidence that President Trump did anything wrong with the Russians. There's overwhelming evidence that Russia is trying to destroy democracy here and abroad. And if you forgive and forget with Putin, you're going to get more of the same and you're going to entice Iran and China to come in 2018 and 2020.

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JOHN DICKERSON: And let me ask you a question here about--about healthcare, which is moving through. I don't want to leave without talking about this.

LINDSEY GRAHAM: Pretty good for seven minutes, yeah.

JOHN DICKERSON: Mitch McConnell has said he wants to get something passed by--by the Fourth of July. On healthcare, you had said, "We're trying to do too much too quick as Republicans. We're running through stop signs." Is by July Fourth running through a stop sign?

LINDSEY GRAHAM: We need to bring this to an end. The House bill is dead in the Senate. Ten percent of support by the American people for the House bill. The House members are mad at us for not taking up healthcare. Well, send us a bill

that will get 12 percent of support.

The bottom line is, the Senate is divided between Medicaid expansion states, non-Medicaid expansion states, the proper role of government. Mitch is trying to bring this together. It's going to be tough. My advice is if we can't replace Obamacare by ourselves, to go to the Democrats and say this.

10% of the sick people in this country drive 90 percent of the cost for all of us. Let's take those 10 percent of really sick people, put them in a federal managed care system so they'll get better outcomes, and save the private sector market if we can't do this by ourselves. That's a good place to start.

JOHN DICKERSON: All right. We're going to have to end it there. Senator, thank you so much for being with us.

*****END OF RUSH TRANSCRIPT*****

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From: Block, Molly
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Wall Street Journal: Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics. This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

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National News Highlights 2.12.18

ABC News: White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

President Donald Trump has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal commission led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

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TRUMP TWEETS

Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/doomsday-climate-scenarios-are-a-joke-1520800377>

Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

By Oren Cass, 3/11/18

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dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics.

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The best illustration lies deep in a 2015 [paper](#) published in Nature by professors from Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley. They found that warm countries tended to experience lower economic growth in abnormally warm years, while cold countries experienced higher growth in such years. Applying that relationship to a much warmer world of the future, they concluded that unmitigated climate change would likely reduce global GDP by more than 20% from what it otherwise would reach by century's end.

That is roughly an order of magnitude higher than prior estimates, and it has received widespread media attention. But it is as preposterous as it is stunning.

While the world economy stagnates, the model projects, cold countries will achieve almost unimaginable wealth. Iceland supposedly will achieve annual per capita income of \$1.5 million by 2100, more than double that of any other country except Finland (\$860,000). Mongolia, which currently ranks 118th in per capita income, is supposed to rise to seventh, at which point the average Mongolian will earn four times as much as the average American. Canada's economy becomes seven times as large as China's.

The technical term to describe this analysis is "silly." Obviously, the relationship posited between temperature and growth has little to do with reality.

Sadly, this paper represents the norm. Last fall the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a [summary](#) of existing research on future climate costs for the United States. As I show in a new [report](#) published by the Manhattan Institute, a small set of studies dominate this research. They reach their imposing dollar figures by refusing, like the Nature study, to consider how society will evolve and adapt.

One Environmental Protection Agency study estimates the potential increase in extreme-temperature deaths by looking at city-specific effects. It assumes that a day counting as unusually hot for some city in 2000 will cause a similar mortality increase in that city in 2100, even if climate change makes it no longer unusual.

The result is a projection that a hot day will kill massive numbers in Northern cities by 2100—though such temperatures are already routine at lower latitudes with no such ill effects. Pittsburgh's extreme-temperature mortality rate is supposed to be 75 times as high in 2100 as that of Phoenix in 2000, though Pittsburgh will not be as hot then as Phoenix was a century

earlier.

But if Pittsburgh's climate steadily warms over the coming century, it will not react to a 100-degree day in 2100 the same way it did in 2000. Even if it didn't warm, we should assume that economic and technological advancement will make the city and its residents more resilient to heat than they are today.

Another analysis relied on by GAO, taking its own approach to extreme-temperature deaths, inadvertently makes this point—then proceeds to ignore it. The “American Climate Prospectus” attempts to combine two different studies that consider whether very hot days—during which the average temperature is above 90 degrees—have higher mortality than days with moderate temperatures. The first of these studies used data from 1968–2002 and found that the answer was yes.

But a second study, published later by some of the same authors, looked at how this relationship had changed over time. Here they found that the mortality rate on hot days had declined precipitously. The adoption of air-conditioning, they concluded, “has positioned the United States to be well adapted to the high-temperature-related mortality impacts of climate change.”

Incredibly, even though overlapping authors had contributed to both of these studies, and one of them was also a reviewer of the “Prospectus” analysis, the “Prospectus” ignored the declining-mortality trend and claimed climate change would kill tens of thousands annually.

This question of adaptation, and how to account for a future different from the present, is not an esoteric detail for science and economics. It is fundamental to understanding the challenge posed by climate change.

If you imagine society is static and incapable of innovation, the prospect of climate change must be terrifying—all of humanity paralyzed like Michelle Pfeiffer in “What Lies Beneath,” watching the bathtub fill slowly with water.

But horror movies are not reality. The 1960s overpopulation scare made sense, assuming that society would not find more productive ways to farm. The 1970s fear of impending limits to growth made sense, assuming that society could not expand a finite supply of resources. Those doomsday predictions failed because the underlying assumption was mistaken. Society is constantly adapting to all sorts of changes. If a projection of climate-change cost ignores adaptation, we can safely ignore it.

Politico: Morning Energy

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/zinke-and-perrys-very-busy-week-128220>

Let's Try This Again

By Kelsey Tamborrino, 3/12/18

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Corn makes some noise: Reps. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.), Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), Kristi Noem (R-S.D.), and Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa), the co-chairs of the Congressional Biofuels Caucus, sent Trump a letter Friday asking him to "reject any changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard that would hurt the farm economy." Ethanol supporters also held a rally in Nevada, Iowa this weekend aimed at sending a message to Trump to back the RFS.

ABC News

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/white-house-school-safety-proposal-focus-empowering-states/story?id=53673052>

White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

By Jordyn Phelps, 3/12/18

President Donald Trump has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal commission led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The only pieces of legislation Trump is set to endorse formally are two bills he's previously backed: The FIX NICS Bill, which calls for making improvements to the nation's background check system, and the STOP School Violence Act, which would provide grants to states in developing anti-school-violence plans. The White House has previously expressed support for both measures.

Additionally, the White House is calling for an audit and review of the FBI tip line, directing the Department of Justice to partner with willing states to train qualified school personnel and calling for a review of expanding mental-health programs and patient-privacy laws.

The White House is also calling on states to pass risk-protection orders that allow law enforcement to remove firearms from individuals who are a demonstrated threat to themselves or others and temporarily prevent those individuals from buying new firearms.

These proposals will be released with little fanfare on Monday, with no specific White House event planned around the occasion.

While Trump has previously suggested he supports universal background checks on all firearm purchases, a senior official explained that the president is supporting the narrow FIX NICS Bill for now is a matter of practicality.

"The president wants to improve our background check system -- we want to act now, we don't want to wait," a senior administration official said. "We believe that this legislation is important and useful in improving the background check system and can pass virtually immediately if there's not obstruction in Congress."

As for the potential for further action on background checks, the official said "that's something we'll discuss in the commission."

The president had also previously called for raising the minimum age on purchasing firearms to 21 across the board, something the NRA strongly opposes.

While the president has in recent weeks suggested other politicians have not pushed for changing the minimum age out of fear for the powerful gun lobby, Trump now is similarly backing down. The administration said that's a debate for states and the Devos-led commission.

"Regarding the age, that's obviously a state-based discussion that's going on right now, and that's something that the commission will look at, get information from the states about what they're considering, and what's impactful and useful," a senior official said.

As for the president's call to arm school personnel, the only action the White House is formally expected to endorse Monday is the Justice Department's working with states to help interested localities in arming and training qualified individuals, with no details yet provided on how such programs will be funded.

"The DOJ ... will provide assistance to states to help them partner with state and local law enforcement to provide appropriate firearms training, and other training with appropriate school personnel," a senior official said. "Those are capable of happening today."

Devos insisted on a call with reporters that the time for talk and no action is over.

"We've had to talk about this topic way too much over the years," she said. "And there's been a

lot of talk in the past but very little action. I have to give credits to the students in their courage and consistent call for action."

But the commission she will chair is operating without a deadline, even as a senior administration official insists it will move with "deliberate speed" and "impatience" from its leader to offer real solutions.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/12/pennsylvania-special-election-lamb-saccone-454728>

Republicans Wage 11th-Hour Blitz in Pa. Special Election

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt, 3/12/18

Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multi-million-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly two-to-one, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated

to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here, cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from four percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close. "Our people get out, we win, and there's no problem."

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for its coverage of the race, saying it had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring his accomplishments.

"The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin resume and trying to make it sound like it's something big, when I have a big resume that they try to scrunch down and don't say anything about," he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a "really good person," told his supporters to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy," and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb's support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb's pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

"Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions," say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he "abandoned PA labor unions," who were "outraged" by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb "supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment."

As they funneled into Trump's rally on Saturday, some of the president's supporters conceded they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative seat.

"I've seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood," said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

"A lot of people I've heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas," she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president's loyalists questioned whether Trump should skip the campaign event, worried that he'd take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

"If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president," said David Urban, who oversaw Trump's 2016 campaign in the state. "It reminds me of, 'Heads I lose, tails you win.'"

CNBC

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/11/elon-musk-says-mars-spaceship-will-be-ready-for-short-trips-by-first-half-of-2019.html>

Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

By Michelle Castillo, 3/11/18

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year.

The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

Musk held a surprise question and answer session at the annual technology and culture festival in Austin, Texas on Sunday. The billionaire told attendees that "we are building the first Mars, or interplanetary ship, and I think we'll be able to short trips, flights by first half of next year."

Mindful of elevating expectations too high, Musk hedged a bit. "Although sometimes, my timelines are a little, you know..." he said to laughter.

SpaceX's BFR rocket system is expected to have capabilities for interplanetary travel, and be fully reusable. A flight will cost less than the initial Falcon 1 flights, which Musk pegged in the \$5 to \$6 million range.

He hopes if BFR launches, others will believe Mars travel is possible, and follow suit.

"The biggest thing that would be helpful is just general support and encouragement and goodwill," Musk said. "I think once we build it we'll have a point of proof something that other companies and countries can go and do. They certainly don't think it's possible, but if we do they'll up their game."

In the immediate term, Mars will need Glass domes, a power station, and an assortment of basic living fundamentals, he cautioned. After the infrastructure is complete, "then really the explosion of entrepreneurial opportunity [will begin], because Mars will need everything from iron foundries to pizza joints," he said.

In a wide-ranging series of remarks, Musk regaled the audience with anecdotes about several of his other ventures, including Tesla and the Boring Company, with the billionaire joking he tweets about the latter more than he actually spends time working on it.

He also raised eyebrows when asked the source of his inspiration, citing iconic entertainer Fred Astaire and irascible hip-hop artist Kanye West.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 10m



Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross will be speaking with representatives of the European Union about eliminating the large Tariffs and Barriers they use against the U.S.A. Not fair to our farmers and manufacturers.



1.1K



1.5K



5.4K



EPA News Highlights 3.12.18

Wall Street Journal: Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics. This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

Politico Morning Energy: Let's Try This Again

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National News Highlights 2.12.18

ABC News: White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

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Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms. Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

CNBC: Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year. The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

TRUMP TWEETS

Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/doomsday-climate-scenarios-are-a-joke-1520800377>

Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

By Oren Cass, 3/11/18

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly

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This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

The best illustration lies deep in a 2015 [paper](#) published in Nature by professors from Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley. They found that warm countries tended to experience lower economic growth in abnormally warm years, while cold countries experienced higher growth in such years. Applying that relationship to a much warmer world of the future, they concluded that unmitigated climate change would likely reduce global GDP by more than 20% from what it otherwise would reach by century's end.

That is roughly an order of magnitude higher than prior estimates, and it has received widespread media attention. But it is as preposterous as it is stunning.

While the world economy stagnates, the model projects, cold countries will achieve almost unimaginable wealth. Iceland supposedly will achieve annual per capita income of \$1.5 million by 2100, more than double that of any other country except Finland (\$860,000). Mongolia, which currently ranks 118th in per capita income, is supposed to rise to seventh, at which point the average Mongolian will earn four times as much as the average American. Canada's economy becomes seven times as large as China's.

The technical term to describe this analysis is "silly." Obviously, the relationship posited between temperature and growth has little to do with reality.

Sadly, this paper represents the norm. Last fall the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a [summary](#) of existing research on future climate costs for the United States. As I show in a new [report](#) published by the Manhattan Institute, a small set of studies dominate this research. They reach their imposing dollar figures by refusing, like the Nature study, to consider how society will evolve and adapt.

One Environmental Protection Agency study estimates the potential increase in extreme-temperature deaths by looking at city-specific effects. It assumes that a day counting as unusually hot for some city in 2000 will cause a similar mortality increase in that city in 2100, even if climate change makes it no longer unusual.

The result is a projection that a hot day will kill massive numbers in Northern cities by 2100—though such temperatures are already routine at lower latitudes with no such ill effects. Pittsburgh's extreme-temperature mortality rate is supposed to be 75 times as high in 2100 as that of Phoenix in 2000, though Pittsburgh will not be as hot then as Phoenix was a century earlier.

But if Pittsburgh's climate steadily warms over the coming century, it will not react to a 100-degree day in 2100 the same way it did in 2000. Even if it didn't warm, we should assume that economic and technological advancement will make the city and its residents more resilient to heat than they are today.

Another analysis relied on by GAO, taking its own approach to extreme-temperature deaths, inadvertently makes this point—then proceeds to ignore it. The "American Climate Prospectus" attempts to combine two different studies that consider whether very hot days—during which the average temperature is above 90 degrees—have higher mortality than days with moderate temperatures. The first of these studies used data from 1968–2002 and found that the answer was yes.

But a second study, published later by some of the same authors, looked at how this relationship had changed over

time. Here they found that the mortality rate on hot days had declined precipitously. The adoption of air-conditioning, they concluded, “has positioned the United States to be well adapted to the high-temperature-related mortality impacts of climate change.”

Incredibly, even though overlapping authors had contributed to both of these studies, and one of them was also a reviewer of the “Prospectus” analysis, the “Prospectus” ignored the declining-mortality trend and claimed climate change would kill tens of thousands annually.

This question of adaptation, and how to account for a future different from the present, is not an esoteric detail for science and economics. It is fundamental to understanding the challenge posed by climate change.

If you imagine society is static and incapable of innovation, the prospect of climate change must be terrifying—all of humanity paralyzed like Michelle Pfeiffer in “What Lies Beneath,” watching the bathtub fill slowly with water.

But horror movies are not reality. The 1960s overpopulation scare made sense, assuming that society would not find more productive ways to farm. The 1970s fear of impending limits to growth made sense, assuming that society could not expand a finite supply of resources. Those doomsday predictions failed because the underlying assumption was mistaken. Society is constantly adapting to all sorts of changes. If a projection of climate-change cost ignores adaptation, we can safely ignore it.

Politico: Morning Energy

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/zinke-and-perrys-very-busy-week-128220>

Let's Try This Again

By Kelsey Tamborrino, 3/12/18

The administration will attempt to resolve the current impasse over the Renewable Fuel Standard today, in a meeting with executives from both the biofuel and oil industries, sources tell Pro’s Eric Wolff, excluding the elected officials who have been present at the last two gatherings Trump held on the subject. Instead, today’s meeting will include Jeff Broin, CEO of POET, who will bring a plan intended to drive increased consumption of ethanol while lowering the cost of Renewable Identification Numbers for two years. Meanwhile, oil refiners will come armed with a report by Charles River Associates arguing in favor of a waiver system to cap the price of biofuel credits.

Corn makes some noise: Reps. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.), Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), Kristi Noem (R-S.D.), and Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa), the co-chairs of the Congressional Biofuels Caucus, sent Trump a letter Friday asking him to “reject any changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard that would hurt the farm economy.” Ethanol supporters also held a rally in Nevada, Iowa this weekend aimed at sending a message to Trump to back the RFS.

ABC News

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/white-house-school-safety-proposal-focus-empowering-states/story?id=53673052>

White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

By Jordyn Phelps, 3/12/18

President [Donald Trump](#) has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal commission led by Secretary of Education [Betsy DeVos](#).

The only pieces of legislation Trump is set to endorse formally are two bills he's previously backed: The FIX NICS Bill, which calls for making improvements to the nation's background check system, and the STOP School Violence Act, which would provide grants to states in developing anti-school-violence plans. The White House has previously expressed support for both measures.

Additionally, the White House is calling for an audit and review of the [FBI](#) tip line, directing the Department of Justice to partner with willing states to train qualified school personnel and calling for a review of expanding mental-health programs and patient-privacy laws.

The White House is also calling on states to pass risk-protection orders that allow law enforcement to remove firearms from individuals who are a demonstrated threat to themselves or others and temporarily prevent those individuals from buying new firearms.

These proposals will be released with little fanfare on Monday, with no specific White House event planned around the occasion.

While Trump has previously suggested he supports [universal background checks](#) on all firearm purchases, a senior official explained that the president is supporting the narrow FIX NICS Bill for now is a matter of practicality.

"The president wants to improve our background check system -- we want to act now, we don't want to wait," a senior administration official said. "We believe that this legislation is important and useful in improving the background check system and can pass virtually immediately if there's not obstruction in Congress."

As for the potential for further action on background checks, the official said "that's something we'll discuss in the commission."

The president had also previously called for raising the minimum age on purchasing firearms to 21 across the board, something the NRA strongly opposes.

While the president has in recent weeks suggested other politicians have not pushed for changing the minimum age out of fear for the powerful gun lobby, Trump now is similarly backing down. The administration said that's a debate for states and the Devos-led commission.

"Regarding the age, that's obviously a state-based discussion that's going on right now, and that's something that the commission will look at, get information from the states about what they're considering, and what's impactful and useful," a senior official said.

As for the president's call to arm school personnel, the only action the White House is formally expected to endorse Monday is the [Justice Department](#)'s working with states to help interested localities in arming and training qualified individuals, with no details yet provided on how such programs will be funded.

"The DOJ ... will provide assistance to states to help them partner with state and local law enforcement to provide appropriate firearms training, and other training with appropriate school personnel," a senior official said. "Those are capable of happening today."

Devos insisted on a call with reporters that the time for talk and no action is over.

"We've had to talk about this topic way too much over the years," she said. "And there's been a lot of talk in the past but very little action. I have to give credits to the students in their courage and consistent call for action."

But the commission she will chair is operating without a deadline, even as a senior administration official insists it will move with "deliberate speed" and "impatience" from its leader to offer real solutions.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/12/pennsylvania-special-election-lamb-saccone-454728>

Republicans Wage 11th-Hour Blitz in Pa. Special Election

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt, 3/12/18

Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multi-million-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly two-to-one, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here, cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from four percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close. "Our people get out, we win, and there's no problem."

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for its coverage of the race, saying it had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring his accomplishments.

"The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin resume and trying to make it sound like it's something big, when I have a big resume that they try to scrunch down and don't say anything about," he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a "really good person," told his supporters to "go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy," and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb's support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb's pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

"Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions," say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he "abandoned PA labor unions," who were "outraged" by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb "supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment."

As they funneled into Trump's rally on Saturday, some of the president's supporters conceded they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative seat.

"I've seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood," said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

"A lot of people I've heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas," she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president's loyalists questioned whether Trump should skip the campaign event, worried that he'd take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

"If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president," said David Urban, who oversaw Trump's 2016 campaign in the state. "It reminds me of, 'Heads I lose, tails you win.'"

CNBC

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/11/elon-musk-says-mars-spaceship-will-be-ready-for-short-trips-by-first-half-of-2019.html>

Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

By Michelle Castillo, 3/11/18

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year.

The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

Musk held a surprise question and answer session at the annual technology and culture festival in Austin, Texas on Sunday. The billionaire told attendees that "we are building the first Mars, or interplanetary ship, and I think we'll be able to do short trips, flights by first half of next year."

Mindful of elevating expectations too high, Musk hedged a bit. "Although sometimes, my timelines are a little, you know..." he said to laughter.

SpaceX's BFR rocket system is expected to have capabilities for interplanetary travel, and be fully reusable. A flight will cost less than the initial Falcon 1 flights, which Musk pegged in the \$5 to \$6 million range.

He hopes if BFR launches, others will believe Mars travel is possible, and follow suit.

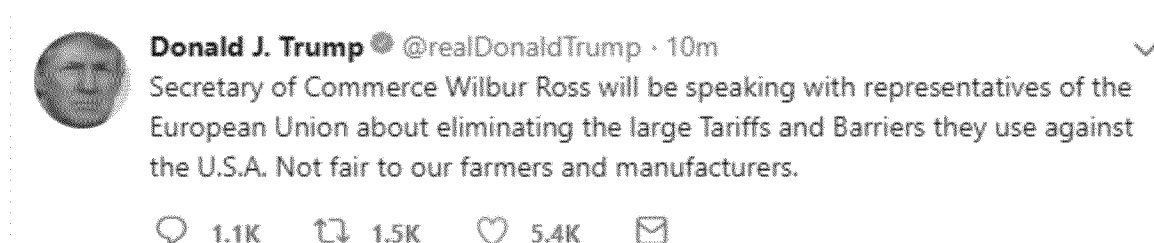
"The biggest thing that would be helpful is just general support and encouragement and goodwill," Musk said. "I think once we build it we'll have a point of proof something that other companies and countries can go and do. They certainly don't think it's possible, but if we do they'll up their game."

In the immediate term, Mars will need Glass domes, a power station, and an assortment of basic living fundamentals, he cautioned. After the infrastructure is complete, "then really the explosion of entrepreneurial opportunity [will begin], because Mars will need everything from iron foundries to pizza joints," he said.

In a wide-ranging series of remarks, Musk regaled the audience with anecdotes about several of his other ventures, including Tesla and the Boring Company, with the billionaire joking he tweets about the latter more than he actually spends time working on it.

He also raised eyebrows when asked the source of his inspiration, citing iconic entertainer Fred Astaire and irascible hip-hop artist Kanye West.

TRUMP TWEETS



To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 7:59:52 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL/EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts. Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government \$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO₂ is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The

letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Tuesday it would forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

"Forgiving Flint's past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city's water system over time," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "Forgiving the city's debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint's water system to continue."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness "will allow for state funding to be spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns."

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the

city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more

sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose

requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

'Behind the Scenes'

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

“Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia’s alleged attempts to influence our Country’s presidential election,” Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

James Hewitt

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 8/21/2017 10:24:32 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Chevron: FIRST LOOK: Inside the new Oval Office -- NYT: W.H. frets about Trump's Phoenix rally -- TRUMP ramps up for 2020 -- BANNON takes aim at Kushner, Ivanka and Cohn -- SECRET SERVICE cash crunch -- B'DAY: Steve Case

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Chevron
08/21/2017 06:22 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](#)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](#)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](#))

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Driving the Day

FIRST LOOK -- INSIDE THE NEW OVAL OFFICE -- <http://bit.ly/2xiEsUg> ...
<http://bit.ly/2ww4vKO>

BULLETINS, at 5:22 a.m.: "MOSCOW (AP) -- U.S. Embassy in Russia suspends issuing nonimmigrant visas until Sept 1, when it will resume giving visas only in Moscow." ... at 5:26 a.m.: "PARIS (AP) -- French media report at least one woman killed as car rams into bus stops in the port city of Marseille."

Good Monday morning. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP has returned to Washington from his working vacation. He is expected to lay out his new strategy for the war in Afghanistan in an address to the nation tonight at 9 p.m. from Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia. The New York Times, Washington Post and other outlets report that Trump is expected to boost the troop presence in Afghanistan by several thousand. **THIS WILL** be a major issue on Capitol Hill in September, as lawmakers gear up to grill Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on the shift in strategy.

ALSO HAPPENING TONIGHT -- CNN's JAKE TAPPER hosts a town hall with **SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** after the president's address.

PHOENIX RALLY TOMORROW -- THE NEW WORRY, via Noah Weiland and Maggie Haberman: "Of particular concern for some officials is the prospect that Mr. Trump may be planning to announce a pardon for Joe Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Ariz., who became an avatar for hard-line policies with his roundups of undocumented immigrants. Some of Mr. Trump's advisers worry that a pardon could deepen the racial wounds exposed in the last week and compound the president's political problems. ...

"Reached by phone at home on Sunday, Mr. Arpaio said that he was not sure why Mr. Trump was thinking of the pardon, and that he had not talked to the president since around Thanksgiving, when Mr. Trump called to ask about the health of Mr. Arpaio's wife. But Mr. Arpaio would not say whether he had talked to the Trump campaign or White House about the visit Tuesday, or whether he had made formal plans with them to make an appearance." <http://nyti.ms/2iigdTu>

-- **PRETTY COOL**: Maggie Haberman and her dad Clyde are both on the front page of today's New York Times. <http://nyti.ms/2iipTKK>

IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC -- "Damaged USS John S. McCain arrives in Singapore; 10 missing," by AP's Annabelle Liang in Singapore and Stephen Wright in Bangkok: "The USS John S. McCain guided missile destroyer docked Monday at Singapore's naval base with 'significant damage' to its hull after an early morning collision with an oil tanker ... The collision east of Singapore between the destroyer and the 183-meter (600-foot) Alnic MC, which has recent safety violations, was the second involving a ship from the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet in the Pacific in two months. Vessels and aircraft from the U.S., Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are searching for the missing sailors. ... The Navy's 7th Fleet said damage to the McCain's hull flooded adjacent compartments including crew berths, machinery and communications rooms. ... The 154-meter (505-foot) destroyer is named after U.S. Sen. John McCain's father and grandfather, who were both U.S. admirals." <http://bit.ly/2uXQ4zw> ... **Reuters photo of the damage** <http://reut.rs/2iirHXf>

-- **TRUMP** was asked about the collision last night outside the White House, and he said, "that's too bad," per a pool report. He later tweeted: "Thoughts & prayers are w/ our @USNavy sailors aboard the #USSJohnSMcCain where search & rescue efforts are underway."

-- **BREITBART -- "Source: McMaster Fails to Brief Trump Before 'That's Too Bad' Error,"** by Matt Boyle: <http://bit.ly/2wvtEFi>

TICK TOCK -- NYT A1, "Bannon Was Set for a Graceful Exit. Then Came Charlottesville," by Jeremy W. Peters and Maggie Haberman: "John F. Kelly, the new White House chief of staff, told Stephen K. Bannon in late July that he needed to go: No need for it to get messy, Mr. Kelly told Mr. Bannon, according to several people with firsthand knowledge of the exchange. The two worked out a mutually amicable departure date for mid-August, with President Trump's blessing. But as Mr. Trump struggled last week to contain a growing public furor over his response to a deadly, race-fueled melee in Virginia, Mr. Bannon clashed with Mr. Kelly over how the president should respond. Give no ground to your critics, Mr. Bannon urged the president, with characteristic truculence. At the same time, New York real estate investor friends told Mr. Trump that the situation with Mr. Bannon was untenable: Steve Roth on Monday, Tom Barrack on Tuesday and Richard LeFrak on Wednesday.

"By Thursday, after Mr. Bannon undercut American policy toward North Korea in an interview published by a left-leaning magazine, Mr. Trump himself had concluded that Mr. Bannon was too much of a liability. By Friday, when he was forced from his job as Mr. Trump's chief strategist, Mr. Bannon had found himself wholly isolated inside a White House where he once operated with such autonomy that he reported only to the president himself. ... Mr. Bannon was notorious for maintaining his own, shadowy presence within the White House. He would frequently skip meetings where policy was discussed, injecting his views into the process in other ways, according to two administration officials. He did not use a computer, preferring to have paper printed and handed to his assistant to stay outside the formal decision-making process. ...

"Mr. Bannon openly complained to White House colleagues that he resented how Ms. Trump would try to undo some of the major policy initiatives that he and Mr. Trump agreed were important to the president's economic nationalist agenda, like withdrawing from the Paris climate accords. In this sense, he was relieved when Mr. Kelly took over and put in place a structure that kept other aides from freelancing. 'Those days are over when Ivanka can run in and lay her head on the desk and cry,' he told multiple people. ... In late July, after a weekend with Robert Mercer, the hedge fund billionaire who finances some of his projects, Mr. Bannon told him, 'I dread going back' to the White House." <http://nyti.ms/2wgaluz>

-- THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JARED AND BANNON : Here's a very telling anecdote from the Times story: Bannon "also advised that ideological softening would buy the president no good will from Democrats or independent voters, whom Mr. Kushner and Ms. Trump believe Mr. Trump still has a chance of reaching. 'They hate the very mention of his name,' Mr. Bannon told them. 'There is no constituency for this.' His advice for the president: 'You've got the base. And you grow the base by getting' things done."

-- IMPORTANT FOR TRUMP: "Prominent U.S. religious conservatives defend Trump after Charlottesville," by Reuters' Doina Chiacu and Sarah N. Lynch: <http://reut.rs/2vWsCjm>

-- BREAKING OVERNIGHT ... TEXAS TRIBUNE: "UT-Austin removing Confederate statues in the middle of the night: In a surprise move, workers at the University of Texas at Austin began removing multiple Confederate statues from a prominent grass mall on campus late Sunday night," by Matthew Watkins: "The surprise news came with little notice. University president Greg Fenves announced that the statues of Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston and John Reagan were being removed because they depict parts of American history that 'run counter to the university's core values' in an e-mail to the campus community just before 11 p.m. A statue of former Texas Gov. James Stephen Hogg was also marked for removal. 'We do not choose our history, but we choose what we honor and celebrate on our campus,' he wrote. 'As UT students return in the coming week, I look forward to welcoming them here for a new academic year with a recommitment to an open, positive and inclusive learning environment for all.'" <http://bit.ly/2wooRGC>

***** **A message from Chevron:** We're piloting a program that uses drones to keep an eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Secret Service out of money to pay agents because of Trump's frequent travel, large family," by USA Today's Kevin Johnson: "The Secret Service can no longer afford to pay hundreds of agents it needs to carry out an expanded protective mission - in large part due to the sheer size of President Trump's family and efforts necessary to secure their multiple residences up and down the East Coast. Secret Service Director Randolph 'Tex' Alles, in an interview with USA TODAY, said more than 1,000 agents have already hit the federally mandated caps for salary and overtime allowances that were meant to last the entire year. The agency has faced a crushing workload since the height of the contentious election season, and it has not relented in the first seven months of the administration. Agents must protect Trump - who has traveled almost every weekend to his properties in Florida, New Jersey and Virginia - and his adult children whose business trips and vacations have taken them across the country and overseas." <https://usat.ly/2x5910r>

WHAT BOB MUELLER IS READING -- NYT A1, "Lobbyist at Trump Campaign Meeting Has a Web of Russian Connections," by Sharon LaFraniere, David D. Kirkpatrick and Ken Vogel: "Rinat Akhmetshin, a Russian immigrant who met last summer with senior Trump campaign officials, has often struck colleagues as a classic Washington mercenary -- loyal to his wife, his daughter and his bank account. He avoided work that would antagonize Moscow, they suggested, only because he profited from his reputation as a man with valuable connections there.

"But interviews with his associates and documents reviewed by The New York Times indicate that Mr. Akhmetshin, who is under scrutiny by the special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, has much deeper ties to the Russian government and Kremlin-backed oligarchs than previously known. He has an association with a former deputy head of a Russian spy service, the F.S.B., and a history of working for close allies of President Vladimir V. Putin. Twice, he has worked on legal battles for Russian tycoons whose opponents suffered sophisticated hacking attacks, arousing allegations of computer espionage. He helped federal prosecutors bring corruption charges against an American businessman in the former Soviet Union who turned out to be working for the C.I.A. ... After Mr. Akhmetshin's presence came to light, a spokesman for Mr. Putin, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters: 'We don't know anything about this person.'" <http://nyti.ms/2wgckuL>

2020 WATCH -- "Trump ramping up for 2020 reelection," by Alex Isenstadt: "President Donald Trump is methodically building a 2020 reelection campaign machine, shunting aside doubts about his viability for a second term as controversy consumes the early months of his administration. Trump is mapping out a fall fundraising tour that is expected to fill his campaign bank account with tens of millions of dollars. His team has tracked dozens of potential Democratic rivals, a list of names that ranges from

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren to Facebook co-founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg. And his administration has received political advice from a top campaign pollster from his 2016 campaign, who has urged the president to keep up his attacks on the mainstream media. On Tuesday, Trump heads to the swing state of Arizona for a campaign-style rally organized by his political operation.

"The preparations, described by 10 White House staffers, [RNC] officials, and Trump campaign aides, come at a perilous time for the president, who has seen his approval rating plummet to historic lows and is facing mounting criticism from senior Republicans. Trump is under fire for going easy on white supremacists and has failed to sign a major piece of legislation, while a special counsel is bearing down on his campaign's dealings with Russia. His chief strategist and main conduit to the activist right, Steve Bannon, left the White House on Friday, and Trump's advisers say the president is increasingly isolated from his own party.

"Yet Trump's team - rankled by reports that other Republicans are preparing to run in 2020 if the president falters - are proceeding on the assumption the 71-year-old president seeks reelection. The work commenced in January when Trump filed federal papers declaring himself a 2020 candidate." <http://politi.co/2vWQKSW>

WASHINGTON EXAMINER'S DAVID DRUCKER -- "Paul Ryan gives huge fundraising boost to House Republicans": "Speaker Paul Ryan continued building a campaign war chest for House Republicans ahead a possibly treacherous midterm election, transferring another \$1.5 million to the [NRCC] in July. The transfer brought the total the Wisconsin Republican has raised for the NRCC to more than \$27 million through July 31, and represented an increase of nearly \$500,000 over what he gave to the House GOP campaign arm in July of last year. Of the \$60 million the NRCC raised through June 30, Ryan was responsible for more than half -- \$33 million (the committee ended the first six months of the year with \$33.7 million in the bank)." <http://washex.am/2vgqLnG>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Labor groups step up pressure on Trump to deliver," by WaPo's Dave Weigel: "Labor leaders, once courted by President Trump, are stepping up their campaign to turn workers against the White House if it does not deliver more on jobs and trade - and if it does not stop undoing Obama-era regulations. The most visible effort, which starts in Indianapolis on Monday afternoon, is a two-week tour organized by the coalition Good Jobs Nation that ropes in labor-friendly politicians. The coalition, launched in 2013 to pressure Barack Obama's White House on trade and wage issues, is organizing rallies throughout the Midwest through Labor Day." <http://wapo.st/2uXWkHI>

-- "First Round of Talks to Revamp Nafta Reveals Friction," by WSJ's Sara Schaefer Muñoz and Bob Davis: "Opening-round talks to remake the North American Free Trade Agreement revealed early fissures dividing the U.S. from Mexico and Canada, including a Trump administration proposal to require a 'substantial portion of autos and auto parts produced under the pact be made in the U.S. The renegotiation of

the trade deal, which was one of President Donald Trump's main campaign promises and a key pillar of his 'America First' agenda aiming to revive U.S. manufacturing and reduce the country's trade deficit, is likely to face many hurdles. Auto makers in all three nations generally oppose the stricter rules floated by the U.S. negotiator, and pro-business lawmakers in Congress don't want the pact altered to restrict trade."

<http://on.wsj.com/2woeWkm>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- The president is lunching with VP Mike Pence and will meet with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at 1:30 p.m. He'll attend the swearing in ceremony for Woody Johnson, who is going to London to be the ambassador to the United Kingdom. Trump is going to Fort Myer at 8:30 p.m. and speaks in prime time about Afghanistan at 9 p.m.

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK:** Save My Care is launching a new digital ad campaign urging Republicans to oppose the ending of subsidies for Obamacare. ***The video***

<http://bit.ly/2fXWF6h>

-- **THE RNC** raised \$10.6 million in July, per a filing made public Sunday.

TODAY'S THE DAY -- "Final Eclipse Plans Under Way as Celestial Event Nears," by WSJ's Daniela Hernandez: "Monday marks the end of a 99-year wait as the country experiences a total eclipse of the sun, coast to coast for the first time since 1918. The event is drawing large crowds to small towns and cities, and is expected to become a vast, shared experience online. ... Roughly 200 million people live within a day's drive of the so-called path of totality-the 70-mile-wide swath cutting across 14 states from Oregon to South Carolina where the sky will go completely dark as the moon passes directly in front of the sun ...

"**Nearly twice** as many will be able to view at least a partial eclipse ... Hopkinsville, Ky., will have one of the nation's longest periods of darkness during the Aug. 21 eclipse. If skies are clear, the entire U.S. will be able to see at least partial obscuration. Skygazers are planning weddings, participating in citizen-science projects, and flocking to festivals featuring aliens, science-themed activities and concerts to mark the celestial event."

<http://on.wsj.com/2xihnBa> ... ***Cool NASA map of the U.S. eclipse path***

<http://politi.co/2v5lQoX> ... ***Livestream on NASA's Facebook page*** <http://bit.ly/2ijuzTB>

-- **PER MORNING MEDIA:** "[T]he broadcast networks all have special reports planned, while the cable news channels will have rolling coverage. They all have correspondents spread across the country, and gimmicks too. CNN, for example, will offer a 360 degree virtual reality live stream. Non-TV outlets like Time magazine are getting in on the action too, lest you decide to point your browser in their direction. Time will have its White House correspondent (and certified pilot!) Zeke Miller fly a plane from D.C. to South Carolina, through the path of the eclipse."

REMEMBERING JERRY LEWIS -- "Jerry Lewis, Hollywood survivor, showman, dies at 91," by AP's Christy Lemire in Los Angeles: "Jerry Lewis epitomized what it meant to be a survivor in Hollywood. Through ups and downs in popularity, health troubles and weight fluctuations and the sorts of seismic shifts that take place over decades in the entertainment industry, Lewis always figured out a way to battle back, to reinvent himself, to stay relevant. It's what enduring stars know how to do instinctively; perhaps it's that very drive that makes them stars in the first place.

"Through it all, Lewis remained the consummate showman, and his distinctive comic legacy surely will continue to survive for decades to come. The manic, rubber-faced performer who jumped and hollered to fame in a stage, radio, TV and film partnership with Dean Martin, settled to become a self-conscious auteur in movies he wrote, produced and directed, and found new fame as the tireless, teary host of the annual muscular dystrophy telethons, died Sunday at home in Las Vegas surrounded by family. He was 91. Lewis, who had battled the lung disease pulmonary fibrosis, heart issues, a debilitating back problem and addiction to pain killers, died of natural causes, according to his publicist." <http://bit.ly/2ijn7rD>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Marine One, carrying President Donald Trump, lands on the South Lawn of the White House on Aug. 20. The president returned to Washington D.C. after a working vacation. | J. David Ake/AP Photo

CHARLIE SYKES in the N.Y.T. Magazine: "I have long admired Paul Ryan and thought of him as the future of the Republican Party. But he's made a Faustian bargain. I keep thinking about that scene from 'A Man for All Seasons,' where Thomas More says, 'What profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul, but for Wales?' And I keep thinking, But for tax cuts, Paul?" <http://nyti.ms/2xjmj98>

BOSTON GLOBE'S ANNIE LINSKEY in Bristol, Tennessee: **"Among NASCAR fans, there's a divide over Trump":** "Donald Trump's seven months in Washington have netted little in the way of meaningful legislative accomplishments or even enforceable executive edicts. Yet many in this crowd said they feel more permission to be outspoken on issues once viewed as sensitive, like race. And in interviews with more than 50 fans here, nearly all have seen divisions in their lives growing wider, with sharper lines between those who support Trump and those who don't. ...

"The white people are starting to stand up," said Miller 'Bud' Fulton, 56, who sat out near his camper sipping beer one evening last week with his son. 'You've got a movement going on.' Fulton, who drove to the racetrack from Ohio, wanted to be clear about one thing: 'I'm not a Klan member. I'm not a racist.'" <http://bit.ly/2fY6Fw9>

THE ADMINISTRATION -- "White House Likely to Name Rep. Jim Bridenstine NASA Chief by Next Month," by WSJ's Andy Pasztor: "The White House by early September plans to nominate Oklahoma Rep. Jim Bridenstine as head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, tapping a Republican legislator who is a strong proponent of commercial space ventures but has scant management experience, according to people familiar with the details. A former active-duty U.S. Navy pilot who publicly sought the position and was widely reported to be the front-runner even weeks before President Donald Trump's inauguration, Mr. Bridenstine has been a leader in fashioning legislation boosting manned exploration of the moon, including minerals mining. Such positions are in line with the views of senior White House officials ... as is his desire to save money-and improve efficiency-by more closely coordinating NASA programs with those at other civilian agencies and the Defense Department."
<http://on.wsj.com/2xifDrv>

-- **WE REPORTED** Bridenstine was in the running in February, and many of the Oklahoma Republican's friends were wondering why the administration has been so slow to tap him for this slot. This will spark a special election in Bridenstine's solidly Republican district, which he snatched from a sitting lawmaker in 2012.

***** **A message from Chevron** : This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> *****

L.A. TIMES -- "Trump impeachment more likely than removal, California Rep. Brad Sherman says at town hall meeting," by Doug Smith: "San Fernando Valley Rep. Brad Sherman received an overwhelming endorsement from constituents Sunday for his decision to introduce articles of impeachment against President Trump. Several hundred attendees of a town hall cheered Sherman's recitation of the reasons he thinks Trump has committed high crimes and misdemeanors, the constitutional standard for impeachment. ...

"Impeachment is more likely than the 25th Amendment, and it could take a few more shocking things to happen,' Sherman said. 'We're not there yet.'"
<http://lat.ms/2fYIRcG>

GABE SHERMAN RETURNS -- "STEVE BANNON READIES HIS REVENGE: The war on Jared Kushner is about to go nuclear," in Vanity Fair's The Hive: "Bannon's main targets are the West Wing's coterie of New York Democrat 'globalists' -- Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner and former Goldman Sachs president Gary Cohn-as well as the 'hawks,' comprised of National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and his deputy, Dina Powell. 'He wants to beat their ideas into submission,' Breitbart News Editor-in-Chief Alex Marlow told me. 'Steve has a lot of things up his sleeve.'

"The chaotic, war-torn West Wing of the past six months will be prologue, but the

coming struggles will be as personal as they are ideological, waged not with leaks but with slashing Breitbart banners. On Sunday, Breitbart took renewed aim at McMaster, with a headline claiming he advocated 'Quran Kissing.' But most of all, there's a deep animosity between Bannon and Kushner, amplified by a lack of respect. Bannon finds Kushner's political instincts highly questionable. 'He said Jared is a dope,' one Bannon ally recalled.

"The two clashed fiercely on personnel decisions and policy debates, both domestic and international, many of which Bannon lost. But Bannon, who was the only West Wing advisor to publicly support the president's response to the violence in Charlottesville, is especially galled at being scapegoated as an anti-Semite in its wake. 'It's one of the attacks he takes most personally because it's not true,' a Breitbart staffer told me."

<http://bit.ly/2wohu1K>

VALLEY READ -- "Tech Goes From White House to Doghouse in Trump's

Washington," by Bloomberg's Todd Shields, Mark Bergen and Ben Brody: "Google once had Barack Obama's ear, served as a revolving door for White House staff and saw its political agenda advance. In Donald Trump's Washington, some conservatives say it's gotten so powerful it should be regulated like a public utility. Google is not alone in a fall from grace. Tech companies -- including Facebook and Amazon.com -- that were previously lauded as innovators are facing increased scrutiny over their size, their hiring practices and whether online news feeds skew liberal. ...

"A regulation that protects data flows is already slated for gutting by the Federal Communications Commission, and, in Congress, a law has been proposed that would bring internet companies under a privacy regulator. Another would increase legal liability for website operators as a way to combat online sex trafficking."

<https://bloom.bg/2vWzjSF>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Tiffany Trump and Marla Maples yesterday at Miss Pixies on 14th

TRANSITIONS -- Molly Drenkard has been promoted to national press secretary for the House Republican Conference.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Steve Case, chairman and CEO of Revolution and co-founder of AOL, is 59. **How he's celebrating:** "First, I'd like to point out that I won't just be celebrating my birthday on August 21st -- it's also World Entrepreneurship Day -- a time to celebrate all the ways in which brilliant minds and ideas have changed the way we live, work, and interact. Today, popular culture often glamorizes the profession. But there is often little glamour involved in building a startup. I like to say that AOL was an overnight success 10 years in the making. It's important that we celebrate the contributions and journeys of those that pursue such challenging paths. On Monday, I'll

be in Tennessee to watch the solar eclipse with my wife Jean. Jean is chairman of National Geographic and I am vice chairman of the Smithsonian Institution, so we decided to travel to a place where we can (weather permitting) see the total eclipse. It's an awesome way to celebrate a birthday!" **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:**

<http://politi.co/2iioTcF>

BIRTHDAYS : Ken Mehlman, global head of public affairs at KKR ... Peter Hamby, head of news at Snapchat and host of Snapchat's "Good Luck America" (hat tips: girlfriend Jackie Alemany, Rachel Racusen and Jesse Ferguson) ... NBC newsman Harry Smith is 65 ... WaPo's Manuel Roig-Franzia ... Ben Howard, special assistant to the president who works in the office of legislative affairs (h/t dad Jack) ... Politico's David Beavers ... Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) is 61 ... Mike Shannon ... Margaret Chan, former director-general of WHO, is 7-0 ... Steve Munroe is 32 ... Elizabeth Stoltz ... Stephen Neuman, Hillary campaign alum, is 41 ... Brian Parks of Locust Street Group ... Matt Cott ... Puja Murgai ... Joe Minges ... Hunter Lipscomb ... Katie Brown ... Politico Europe's Stephanie Semeraro ...

... **Arkansas Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin** is 49 (h/t Matt Rhoades) ... Elaine Godfrey, assistant editor at The Atlantic and author of their "Politics and Policy Daily" newsletter (h/t Daniel Stublen) ... Ruben Olmos, president of government/public affairs shop Global Nexus, LLC ... Cheyne Worley ... Mary Ann Naylor ... Bruce Evans ... Katherine Rojas ... Sarah Rusciano ... Joan Kirchner ... Marguerite Biagi ... former Fox News and NY Post reporter Jana Winter ... David Heifetz ... Matt DeCamp ... Reuben Jeffery is 64 ... Greg Bell, executive comms at Pinterest ... Robert Wells ... Joe Mathieu ... Quartz's Cameron Hough ... Lindsay Fisher, VP at Citigroup ... WMAL's Heather Smith ... Francine McMahon ... former Calif. Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado is 5-0 ... Brandon Lee Breaux ... Larry Martin ... Paul Harstad (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Lamont Black ... Jack Kelly ... Tom Houck ... Jessica Lee ... Adam Dubitsky ... Heather Martin ... Olympic gold medal sprinter Usain Bolt is 31 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from Chevron** : This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines-all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2vLsVyX> ***** _

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by Samsung
06/11/2017 10:55 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- WE HEAR ... There is a chance Congress will stay in session for part of August. There has been political pressure from some members of the House and Senate to stay in town and try to get some things done instead of take a five-week recess. The pressure will only increase if the Obamacare repeal and replace isn't done in the next few weeks. Congress has just 27 days in session until the summer break. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise: many lawmakers have had to face angry constituents on trips home.

STATEMENTS FROM PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP from Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey -- **at 8:22 a.m.:** "The #FakeNews MSM doesn't report the great economic news since Election Day. #DOW up 16%. #NASDAQ up 19.5%. Drilling & energy sector.....way up. Regulations way down. 600,000+ new jobs added. Unemployment down to 4.3%. Business and economic enthusiasm way up- record levels!" ... **at 8:29 a.m.:** "I believe the James Comey leaks will be far more prevalent than anyone ever thought possible. Totally illegal? Very 'cowardly!'" ... **at 8:49 a.m.:** "The Democrats have no message, not on economics, not on taxes, not on jobs, not on failing #Obamacare. They are only OBSTRUCTIONISTS!"

-- TWO QUICK THINGS : Many Democrats will privately agree with Trump that they oftentimes lack a coherent message. But Trump's presidency has unified Democrats for the first time in a long time ... Trump has majorities in the House and Senate, and he's blaming Democrats for obstructing him.

BREAKING OVERSEAS -- TRUMP PUTS OFF U.K. VISIT -- THE GUARDIAN:
"Donald Trump's state visit to Britain put on hold: U.S. president told Theresa May he did not want trip to go ahead if there were large-scale public protests": "Donald

Trump has told Theresa May in a phone call he does not want to go ahead with a state visit to Britain until the British public supports him coming. The U.S. president said he did not want to come if there were large-scale protests and his remarks in effect put the visit on hold for some time. The call was made in recent weeks, according to a Downing Street adviser who was in the room. The statement surprised May, according to those present." <http://bit.ly/2reskVQ>

Good Sunday morning. Jake will be on Steve Hilton's new Fox News show "The Next Revolution" live from Los Angeles tonight at 9 p.m. East Coast time.

TRUMP stopped by a wedding at his country club in New Jersey last night.
<http://bit.ly/2t98Uhy>

YOU'LL HEAR THIS QUOTE A LOT -- Donald Trump Jr. on Fox News, via the Washington Post: "'When he tells you to do something, guess what? There's no ambiguity in it, there's no, 'Hey, I'm hoping,' Trump said. 'You and I are friends: 'Hey, I hope this happens, but you've got to do your job.' That's what he told Comey. And for this guy as a politician to then go back and write a memo: 'Oh, I felt threatened.' He felt so threatened -- but he didn't do anything.' Trump also said that Comey's testimony 'vindicated' the president and that everything in it was 'basically ridiculous.'"
<http://wapo.st/2t9eJf5>

ALEX ISENSTADT in DEER VALLEY, UTAH -- "Romney stokes speculation he's weighing another political run : The 2012 GOP nominee is plotting how to help Republicans in the midterms, and he's being coy about his own political future": "Mitt Romney is once again testing his political power - critiquing President Donald Trump, raising money and campaigning for fellow Republicans, and not ruling out another run for office for himself. The 2012 GOP nominee is returning to the spotlight, six months after Trump -- the man Romney once savaged as unfit for the presidency -- nearly picked him to be secretary of state. ...

"Spencer Zwick, a longtime Romney adviser and political gatekeeper, said he'd been inundated with appeals from Republican candidates asking the former GOP nominee to help them. Last week, Romney held his first fundraiser for a 2018 hopeful, an event benefiting Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake, a Republican who has been fiercely critical of the president. Over the coming days, Romney is also expected to release a robo-call boosting Georgia Republican Karen Handel, who has been losing ground in a high-stakes June 20 special House election she had once been favored to win.

"All I can tell you is that the number of requests that Mitt has gotten in the last month to come to a district or to come to a state for a sitting senator - it's like he's a presidential candidate again, which I was surprised by,' said Zwick, who doubles as a top political aide to House Speaker Paul Ryan. 'There are only so many people in the party that can headline these things.'" <http://politi.co/2rZkZ9X>

-- THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE between Republicans wanting to take advantage of

Romney's fundraising prowess, and his running for office and garnering the support he needs to win.

SUNDAY BEST -- JOHN DICKERSON speaks with **SEN. JAMES LANKFORD (R-OKLA.)** on **CBS'S "FACE THE NATION"** -- **DICKERSON:** "On the question of influencing the investigation, again, thinking about the scale, on the one hand the president might have done something that was a little bit crossing a line but he's a new guy to the job all the way to this question of obstruction of justice. Where do you put, knowing what you know about the president's behavior, where do you put what he did on that scale?" **LANKFORD:** "I would say it's very inappropriate. As Jim Comey said, it's awkward to be able to have the president of the United States sitting down with someone in the F.B.I., the leadership of the F.B.I., to be able to have direct questions. And for the issue to come up about the Michael Flynn investigations, inappropriate. But the way that it was handled, with no follow-up, with no other press, with no other return to that topic, it looks like what I called a pretty light touch. If this is trying to interfere in a process of any investigation, it doesn't seem like it was number one, very effective, and number two, came up more than once in a conversation. So this looks more like an inappropriate conversation than obstruction."

-- **SEN. JACK REED (D-R.I.)** tells **CHRIS WALLACE** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY"** that Trump needs to be deposed on all Russia-related questions -- "[T]he deposition is not just about his conversations with Mr. Comey. There are issues with respect to his conversation with director of national intelligence Dan Coats, Admiral Rogers, the NSA director, his relationships with Manafort. By the time the special prosecutor Mr. Mueller is ready to depose or ask the president to speak under oath, there are a myriad of questions. So what I don't want to see is simply, we'll I just said I talk about Comey, I'm not talking about anything else. To resolve this situation he has to be prepared to speak on all these matters."

-- **PREET BHARARA** speaks to **GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS** on **ABC'S "THIS WEEK"** -- **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "The president's defenders, like Alan Dershowitz, say there's no grounds for obstruction. You talked about that. And he, in fact, says that presidents have the constitutional right to fire FBI directors and investigations as much as they want. One of the president's attorneys, Jay Sekulow, is coming up next. He says there's no there there, no basis for obstruction. You're a former prosecutor. Are -- is there evidence there ... to begin a case for obstruction?" **BHARARA :** "I think there's absolutely evidence to begin a case. I think it's very important for all sorts of armchair speculators in the law to be clear that no one knows right now whether there is a provable case of obstruction. It's also true I think from based on what I see as a third party and out of government that there's no basis to say there's no obstruction."

-- **SEN. SUSAN COLLINS (R-Maine)** talks to **BRIANNA KEILAR** on **CNN's "STATE OF THE UNION"** -- **KEILAR:** "I want to ask you about something the president has been cagey about, and that is these tapes, of course. So, I wonder if you would support issuing a subpoena to the White House. Right now, it's just a request coming from Congress. Would you support issuing a subpoena for the recordings or any documents

that might come from that?" **COLLINS:** "This is an issue that the president should have cleared up in his press conference. He should give a straight yes or no to the answer -- to the question of whether or not the tapes exist. And he should voluntarily turn them over not only to the Senate Intelligence Committee, but to the special counsel. So, I don't think a subpoena should be necessary. And I don't understand why the president just doesn't clear this matter up once and for all."

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung is committed to creating high-skilled jobs, investing in cutting-edge manufacturing and R&D, and forming trusted partnerships nationwide. Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years, with 18,500 employees across the country. Our Austin, TX semiconductor facility is one of the single-largest U.S. FDI's. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

THE NEXT MAIN EVENT -- "Sessions will testify before Senate in Russia investigation," by Kyle Cheney and John Bresnahan: "In a letter to his former colleagues in the House and Senate, Sessions canceled a planned appearance before Congress' appropriations committees. Sessions said he instead plans to appear on Tuesday before the Intelligence panel to respond to questions stemming from FBI director James Comey's bombshell testimony last Thursday. ...

"If this is an open session ... Sessions will likely face a barrage of questions over his role in Comey's dismissal, his independence from President Donald Trump, and allegations of additional unreported meetings with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak. Sessions has already recused himself from the Russia probe after failing to tell the Senate Judiciary Committee during his confirmation of two meetings with Kislyak, and there have been reports of additional sessions." <http://politi.co/2rOVc5P>

-- **SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN (D-CALIF.)** told Brianna Keilar on "State of the Union" that she didn't know if the hearing will be open.

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW -- "What's next for Comey? Maybe law, corporate work, politics," by AP's Eric Tucker: "So what's next for James Comey? The former FBI director boldly challenged the president who fired him, accused the Trump administration of lying and supplied material that could be used to build a case against President Donald Trump. But after stepping away from the Capitol Hill spotlight, where he's always seemed comfortable, the 56-year-old veteran lawman now confronts the same question long faced by Washington officials after their government service.

"His dry quip at a riveting Senate hearing that he was 'between opportunities' vastly understates the career prospects now available to him - not to mention potential benefits from the public's fascination with a man who has commanded respect while drawing outrage from both political parties." <http://apne.ws/2sQIkMb>

EYE-POPPING NUMBERS FROM WAPO'S KAREN TUMULTY in SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA -- "Trump looms over Georgia special election, a proxy battle for 2018": "It is an arms race of money and organization. The latest fundraising report, filed

Thursday, showed Ossoff raising an additional \$15 million in the past two months, nearly quadruple what Handel brought in. With outside groups weighing in, the race has thus far cost more than \$40 million -- far outpacing the previous record for a congressional race of nearly \$30 million for a Florida contest in 2012.

"Polls indicate there are few voters still undecided. 'The next 10 days are about turning out the base. There are more of us than them in the district. The more people who vote, the better,' said Corry Bliss, who heads the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC affiliated with House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.). That organization alone plans to spend about \$7 million in the race." <http://wapo.st/2rjhPM4>

FASCINATING READ -- "Palantir goes from Pentagon outsider to Mattis' inner circle," by Jacqueline Klimas and Bryan Bender: "The Trump era has brought a change of fortune for a Silicon Valley software company founded by presidential adviser Peter Thiel - turning it from a Pentagon outcast to a player with three allies in Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' inner circle. At least three Pentagon officials close to Mattis, including his deputy chief of staff and a longtime confidante, either worked, lobbied or consulted for Palantir Technologies, according to ethics disclosures obtained by POLITICO. That's an unusually high number of people from one company to have such daily contact with the Pentagon leader, some analysts say.

"It also represents a sharp rise in prominence for the company, which just months ago could barely get a meeting in the Pentagon. Last year, Palantir even had to go to court to force its way into a competition for a lucrative Army contract. Thiel was one of the only Silicon Valley titans to openly support Trump during the campaign, a role that gave him a prime speaking slot at last summer's Republican convention. He has since acted as a key adviser arranging meetings among the president and other tech executives. While there's no evidence he had a direct hand in these specific Pentagon hires, analysts say they absolutely show his growing influence in the administration, where he holds no formal role." <http://politi.co/2sqMdbS>

DEMOCRATS' NEW PLAYBOOK -- "Democrats bet on Trump in Virginia governor's race," by Kevin Robillard: "Virginia's Democratic primary on Tuesday is shaping up to be the first real test of liberalism in the Trump era, with both candidates lurching for increasingly leftward policies to position themselves in contrast with President Donald Trump. ...

"Virginia's gubernatorial elections often develop into contrasts with a new president, but there's a stark difference between now and how Republican candidate Bob McDonnell handled then-President Barack Obama in 2009. While critical of the Obama's economic record, the future governor also regularly praised Obama for supporting school choice, straddling the partisan divide. The Democrats have felt no need to do the same with the less popular Trump, whose approval rating was at 36 percent in a recent Washington Post-George Mason University poll of Virginia." <http://politi.co/2rjHzYJ>

THE LATEST ON HEALTH CARE -- "Fate of Planned Parenthood funding tied to

Senate moderates," by Jen Haberkorn: "Two female Senate Republicans could stop the anti-abortion movement from achieving its most significant win against Planned Parenthood in decades. Most Republicans want to eliminate the group's \$555 million in federal funding as part of their bill to repeal Obamacare. But as Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tries to solve the legislative Rubik's Cube of finding 50 votes for repeal, he may have to drop the Planned Parenthood cut to win the support of the two Republican moderates, Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska."
<http://politi.co/2sbbpTf>

WHAT SILICON VALLEY IS READING -- "Uber Board to Discuss CEO Travis Kalanick's Possible Leave of Absence: Board also set to vote on recommendations from a report of an investigation into workplace issues," by WSJ's Greg Bensinger: "Uber Technologies Inc. Chief Executive Travis Kalanick will discuss taking a possible leave of absence when the board of directors of the embattled ride-hailing company meets Sunday morning, according to a person familiar with the matter.

"Also on the agenda when the seven-person board convenes is a vote on a series of recommendations from a report prepared by former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder regarding its workplace. It was uncertain whether Mr. Kalanick would ultimately take the leave or whether the board would approve of such a measure, which would require finding a temporary replacement in short order." <http://on.wsj.com/2r7Ram8>

THE JUICE ...

-- **SPOTTED** at Mitt Romney's E2 Summit in Deer Valley, Utah: New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, Spencer Zwick, Matt Waldrup, Corry Bliss, Speaker Paul Ryan, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Kristen Soltis Anderson, Ron Kaufman, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), Anthony Scaramucci, Bianna Golodryga, Will Ritter, Mary Bono Mack, Lanhee Chen, Leah Malone and Andrew Liveris.

RIP -- @SecondLady: "Rest in peace Oreo. You touched a lot of hearts in your little life. Our family will miss you very much." <http://bit.ly/2sgQOxR>

Playbook Reads

'WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WEEK' AT THE WHITE HOUSE -- "Donald and Ivanka Trump head to Wisconsin for jobs push," by ABC News' Jordyn Phelps: "President Donald Trump and his daughter Ivanka Trump are set to travel to Wisconsin Tuesday to join Gov. Scott Walker to tour a technical college, as the administration puts a renewed focus on its goal of job creation. The trip is just one event in a week full of activities built around promoting technical skills training and apprenticeships. [They are d]ubbing it 'workforce development week' ...

"The president is expected to make what the administration is billing as a 'major policy

speech' at the Department of Labor on Wednesday, in which he'll lay out steps the administration will take to encourage workforce development and also call for Congressional action. Ivanka Trump will also lead a roundtable with some 15 CEOs. On Thursday, the president will also host a roundtable discussion, where he will welcome eight governors from states with successful workforce development programs to the White House." <http://abcn.ws/2r7tOwT>

THE NEW U.K. POLITICAL REALITY -- "For Britain, Political Stability Is a Quaint Relic," by NYT's Steven Erlanger in London: "In a little more than two years, Britain has had two general elections and a nationwide referendum. Each time, the politicians, pollsters, betting markets, political scientists and commentators have got it wrong.

"Once considered one of the most politically stable countries in the world, regularly turning out majority governments, Britain is increasingly confusing and unpredictable, both to its allies and itself. Far from settling the fierce divisions exposed by last year's referendum on Britain's exit from the European Union, or Brexit, the election on Thursday only made them worse." <http://nyti.ms/2shhy1i>

-- THE POLITICO EUROPE TICK TOCK: "How Theresa May lost it: A reluctance to delegate, hubris and campaigning ineptitude ruined British prime minister's grand plan to secure a mandate," by Tom McTague, Charlie Cooper and Annabelle Dickson in London: "Halfway through Britain's seven-week snap election campaign, some in Theresa May's team came to the conclusion that they had a problem - the candidate. At a gathering of senior staff in Conservative campaign headquarters in central London, one of May's top operatives told the sitting prime minister that she risked crashing and burning like Sarah Palin did in 2008. ... To the operative, May was overly controlling and her inexperience would tell during a short, intense campaign. May listened with good grace ... [but] changed nothing." <http://politi.co/2t8VuSG>

ACTUAL FAKE NEWS - NYT A22, "A Pro-Trump Conspiracy Theorist, a False Tweet and a Runaway Story," by Jeremy Peters: "A pro-Trump activist notorious for his amateur sleuthing into red herrings like the 'Pizzagate' hoax and a conspiracy theory involving the murder of a Democratic aide, Mr. Posobiec wrote on May 17 that Mr. Comey, the recently ousted F.B.I. director, had 'said under oath that Trump did not ask him to halt any investigation.' ...

"But as the journey of that one tweet shows, misinformed, distorted and false stories are gaining traction far beyond the fringes of the internet. Just 14 words from Mr. Posobiec's Twitter account would spread far enough to provide grist for a prime-time Fox News commentary and a Rush Limbaugh monologue that reached millions of listeners, forging an alternative first draft of history in corners of the conservative media where President Trump's troubles are often explained away as fabrications by his journalist enemies.

"In this fragmented media environment, the spread of false information is accelerated and amplified by a web of allied activist-journalists with large online

followings, a White House that grants them access and, occasionally, a president who validates their work. The right-wing media machine that President Bill Clinton's aides once referred to as 'conspiracy commerce' is now far more mature, extensive and, in the internet age, tough to counter." <http://nyti.ms/2sbduPm>

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years. Today, we employ more than 18,500 people across the country, covering nearly every state. Samsung Austin Semiconductor (SAS) hosts 6,000+ manufacturing and engineering jobs and has become a \$17bn investment - making it one of the largest single FDI's in the U.S. We're also committed to building strong communities through citizenship and support of programs for children's health, STEAM education, veterans and military families. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

DEEP DIVES -- NYT A1, "Opioid Dealers Embrace the Dark Web to Send Deadly Drugs by Mail: Anonymous online sales are surging, and people are dying. Despite dozens of arrests, new merchants - many based in Asia - quickly pop up," by Nathaniel Popper (print headline: "Drug Trade Rises in Dark Corners of the Internet"): "As the nation's opioid crisis worsens, the authorities are confronting a resurgent, unruly player in the illicit trade of the deadly drugs, one that threatens to be even more formidable than the cartels. The internet. In a growing number of arrests and overdoses, law enforcement officials say, the drugs are being bought online. Internet sales have allowed powerful synthetic opioids such as fentanyl - the fastest-growing cause of overdoses nationwide - to reach living rooms in nearly every region of the country, as they arrive in small packages in the mail." <http://nyti.ms/2t91CdL>

--**"China's New Bridges: Rising High, but Buried in Debt:** China has built hundreds of dazzling new bridges, including the longest and highest, but many have fostered debt and corruption," by NYT's Chris Buckley: "The eye-popping structures have slashed travel times in some areas, made business easier and generated a sizable slice of the country's economy, laying a foundation, in theory at least, for decades of future growth. But as the bridges and the expressways they span keep rising, critics say construction has become an end unto itself. Fueled by government-backed loans and urged on by the big construction companies and officials who profit from them, many of the projects are piling up debt and breeding corruption while producing questionable transportation benefits." <http://nyti.ms/2t9er7l>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"Bob Dylan's Nobel Lecture":** "Some of these same things have happened to you. You too have had drugs dropped into your wine. You too have shared a bed with the wrong woman. You too have been spellbound by sweet voices with strange melodies. You too have come so far and have been so far blown back." <http://bit.ly/2rULMnO>

--**"How the D-Day Invasion Was Planned"** - in the August 1944 issue of Popular Mechanics: "Every one of the thousands of men landed in France required about 10

ship tons of overall equipment, and an additional ship ton every 30 days. The number of separate items needed was about a million. Some of these million items had to be accumulated in millions, resulting in astronomical totals." <http://bit.ly/2smaY97>

--**"Eternal Champions,"** by Sam Borden in ESPN: "Seven months ago, Brazilian underdogs Chapecoense boarded a plane to play in the game of their lives. Instead, their biggest moment turned into a tragedy no one can forget." <http://es.pn/2r9Y3aB> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"Inside Trump's secretive immigration court: far from scrutiny and legal aid,"** by The Guardian's Oliver Laughland in Jena, Louisiana: "[T]he remote LaSalle detention facility is part of Trump's attempt to fast-track deportations. A visit reveals a hastily arranged setup beset by flaws." <http://bit.ly/2scNvHQ>

--**"Rolling Stone at 50: How Hunter S. Thompson Became a Legend,"** by Patrick Doyle in Rolling Stone - per The Browser's description: "Sports Illustrated asked Hunter S. Thompson for 250 words about a Las Vegas motorbike race. He gave them 2,500 words - and when they spiked the piece he took it to Rolling Stone, which wanted more. The result was Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas, published in 1971. Thompson's coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign 'reshaped what it meant to write about politics'. But 'getting work out of him was becoming difficult'. Editing him 'was a bit like being a cornerman for Ali.'" <http://rol.st/2smiHEk>

--**"Weddings of the 0.01 Percent,"** by Julia Rubin in Racked: "Cristal! Caviar! Chris Martin! How the rich (and sometimes famous) get married." <http://bit.ly/2smtvCz>

--**"The truth about tarot,"** by James McConnachie in Aeon Magazine: "Whether divining ancient wisdoms or elevating the art of cold reading, tarot is a form of therapy, much like psychoanalysis." <http://bit.ly/2sL1XDY> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"The Worst Ever First Day on the Job -- Punching In: My Life as a Long Haul Trucker,"** by Finn Murphy in Literary Hub: "Moving companies perform four categories of moving work: local, commercial, long-distance, and international. Callahan's work was mostly local moving, loading up someone's house in the morning and then unloading in the afternoon at the new house. It takes the greatest toll on the body because you are handling stuff every working day. It's the local stuff that eventually kills you or drives you to drink; more commonly, both." <http://bit.ly/2s4Nuoy>

--**"There Were Once Jews Here,"** by Lucette Lagnado, author of "The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: A Jewish Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World," in Tablet Magazine: "During the Six-Day War, some of the Arab countries at war with Israel -- Egypt, Tunisia, Libya -- treated their Jewish populations terribly, causing them to leave en masse." <http://bit.ly/2t920Ok> ... **\$10.01 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2sbmAeT>

--**"Dear Brazilian Government, Thanks for the Contracts,"** by Michael Smith, Sabrina Valle, and Blake Schmidt on the cover of Bloomberg Businessweek: "There's graft, and

then there's the graft machine perfected by Odebrecht, one of the world's biggest construction companies." <https://bloom.bg/2rOEHqr> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2rjKL6H>

--**"Kill them, kill them, kill them': the volunteer army plotting to wipe out Britain's grey squirrels,"** by Patrick Barkham in The Guardian: "The red squirrel is under threat of extinction across Britain. Their supporters believe the only way to save them is to exterminate their enemy: the greys. But are they just prejudiced against non-native species?" <http://bit.ly/2re8OE6>

--**"This County Switched From Backing Obama to Trump. Here's What Happened,"** by Josh Siegel in The Daily Signal: "In 1980, manufacturing jobs comprised 38 percent of all jobs in Coos [New Hampshire]. In 2014, only 7 percent of jobs in the county were in manufacturing. Payroll wages from manufacturing have dropped from 49 percent to 9 percent since the mid-1980s." <http://bit.ly/2sL2A0v>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly enjoying "DHS Night" Friday night at the Nats game along with members of DHS' workforce - **pic** <http://bit.ly/2rjyfUM> ... Anson Kaye, partner at GMMB, in New Orleans last night, accepting a Gold ADDY award (and also a Mosaic Award) for the ad "Mirrors" (<http://bit.ly/2sbAIEM>) he created for Hillary for America

SPOTTED at State Department senior White House adviser Matt Mowers' birthday party at Wet Dog Tavern last night (which coincidentally also hosted RNC alum Anna Epstein's birthday party at the same time): Cassie Spodak, Ryan Williams, Zeke Miller, Ben Sparks, Jill Barclay, Phil Elliott, Ethan Zorfas, Ben DeMarzo, Maren Kasper, Michael Kratsios, Kailani Koenig, Tom Dickens, Elise Dietsch Dickens, Eric Jones, Alan He, Andy Polesovsky, Corey Ershow, Kelly Klass, Britt Carter.

SHIELDS/WALSH ENGAGEMENT PARTY -- THE BRITISH EMBASSY hosted an engagement party last night for **Mike Shields**, former RNC chief of staff and founder and partner at Convergence Media and **Katie Walsh**, former WH deputy chief of staff and former RNC chief of staff who is now senior advisor at America First Policies. Amb. Kim Darroch toasted the pair and called them the "ultimate political couple" and told the crowd how the couple got engaged in the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street, where the prime minister has met with his or her cabinet every week for 250 years. He also needled Mike, who has a British mother and is a big soccer fan, for supporting Ipswich, who he cast as much inferior to Chelsea in the Premier League. The food at the party included: herb-crusted fillet of lamb, goat's cheese and beetroot, terrine of pork, and chili shrimp while desserts included mini Bakewell tart, strawberry tartlet and passion fruit mousse. **Pics of the couple** <http://bit.ly/2sbk3Bp> ... <http://bit.ly/2saVbhk> ... **Reince Priebus taking a pic of the couple as they thanked friends for coming** <http://bit.ly/2rOGmfz> ... **The crowd** <http://bit.ly/2rOzjDs>

SPOTTED: Reince and Sally Priebus, Sean and Rebecca Spicer, Steven Mnuchin and his chief of staff Eli Miller chatting on a walk around the gardens of the embassy, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Rob and Cindy Simms, Cara Mason, Jessica Ditto, Sarah and Dave Armstrong, Tim Pataki, Richard Walters, Rob Jesmer chatting with Sean Cairncross (Sean and Rob have been friends since they were 5 years old growing up in Minnesota), Brian O. Walsh, Josh Pitcock, Mike's 15-year-old son Aidan Shields-Eads, Molly Donlin, Steven Law, Sam Feist, Mike Allen, Andrew Bremberg, Lew Eisenberg, Madeleine Westerhout, Johnny DeStefano, Renee Hudson, Michael Hoare, Lindsay Walters, Vanessa Morrone and Mike Ambrosini, Zach and Mallory Hunter.

ENGAGED -- Andrew Feldman, principal of the progressive communications firm Feldman Strategies, proposed to his longtime girlfriend **Megan Salzman** Saturday night during Country Music Fest in Nashville. Megan is a communications manager at the early education advocacy group The First Five Years Fund. "Andrew and Megan met on OKCupid nearly four and a half years ago. Andrew points out that the ring has extra significant because the center stone was Megan's mother's engagement stone and she is no longer with us." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2r7KrlZ> ... <http://bit.ly/2rOFJTb> ... **The ring** <http://bit.ly/2rjzLGh>

-- **Jessica Huff**, social media director for McClatchy in Dallas and a Politico alum, and **Spenser Walters**, an area sales rep for Duvel USA, got engaged on Friday night in Austin, Texas. She emails us: "We met in college at UT-Austin after he came back from Afghanistan. He was serving in the Marines. We had the same group of friends but I hadn't met him yet since he was overseas. Once he was back, one of our first dates was at a restaurant in the hill country in Texas overlooking the lake, and so while visiting Austin he took me back there and proposed during sunset. It's a very special place to us so it was perfect!" **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2shqCmX> ... **The ring** <http://bit.ly/2t9rnKO>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Travis Considine, communications manager at Uber Texas and a John McCain and Rick Perry alum, married **Morgan Smith**, a reporter with The Texas Tribune, on Saturday evening at the San Antonio Museum of Art. Guests enjoyed a bluegrass band and flawless weather at the outdoor ceremony and reception. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2t9jc1c> ... **Travis' speech** <http://bit.ly/2sQLqi2>

SPOTTED: Tucker and Alexia Bounds, Brittany Bramell, Trevor Theunissen, Chris Miller, Allie Brandenburger and Ryan Mahoney, Kevin Benacci, Emily Ramshaw, Matt and Jen Hirsch, Evan Smith, Perrylanders Rob Johnson, Mark Miner, and Andy Hemming.

OBAMA ALUMNI - Meredith Carden, head of partnerships at Sidewire, got married this weekend to **Micah Fergenson**, law clerk at U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in a small ceremony at Four Follies Farm in Tiverton, Rhode Island. The couple first met in 2009 when they were working for President Obama. Micah worked in the WH Counsel's Office, and Meredith worked for FLOTUS in the East Wing. They lost touch, but were reintroduced by a mutual friend in 2015. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2sb3Plq>

--**"Lily Rothman, Elihu Dietz" - N.Y. Times:** "Ms. Rothman, 31, is the history and archives editor at Time magazine, overseeing its history coverage, Life.com and the magazine's digital archive. She also wrote 'Everything You Need to Ace American History in One Big Fat Notebook.' She graduated magna cum laude from Yale and received a master's degree in journalism from the City University of New York. ... Mr. Dietz, 32, is a candidate for a master's degree in environmental management at the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke, where he studies the integration of renewable energy into the grid. He graduated from St. John's College in Santa Fe, N.M. ... The groom is a great-great-grandson and a namesake of Elihu Root, who was President Theodore Roosevelt's secretary of state and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1912. He is also a direct descendant of President Ulysses S. Grant. The couple met on a blind date arranged by friends in Brooklyn in 2011." **With pic**
<http://nyti.ms/2rZpO2N>

--**"Alison Kenworthy, Michael Koenigs":** "The bride and groom work at ABC News in New York, where they met. She is a news producer for 'Good Morning America.' He is a senior coordinating producer, creating content that is used on-air and on the website. He was also the host of 'Election Cycle,' a series in 2016 that featured him bicycling through swing states and interviewing voters along the way. The bride, 33, graduated from Rutgers. ... Mr. Koenigs, 30, graduated cum laude from Harvard." **With pic**
<http://nyti.ms/2t8GB2L>

--**"Julia Pudlin, David Wishnick":** "Ms. Pudlin, 32, worked until earlier this year at the United States Treasury Department as a deputy executive secretary in the chief of staff's office and a senior adviser to the general counsel. On July 10 she is to begin working as the assistant deputy general counsel for government investigations at Comcast in Philadelphia. She graduated summa cum laude from Yale, and received a law degree magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania. ... Mr. Wishnick, also 32, was until recently an associate in the Washington office of Jenner & Block, a Chicago law firm. On July 12 he is to begin a fellowship, conducting research in contract law, at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He graduated magna cum laude from Brown, and received a law degree from Yale. ... The couple met in April 2013 through the dating app Hinge." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2rOZSIV>

--**"Victoria St. Martin, Richard G. Jones":** "The bride, 36, is a general assignment reporter on the local desk of The Washington Post. She graduated from Rutgers and received a master's degree in journalism from American University. ... The groom, 46, is to become the director of the journalism program at Notre Dame. Until recently, he was an associate editor in news administration for The New York Times, as well as the director of the newspaper's Student Journalism Institute. He graduated from the University of Delaware and has a master's degree in journalism from Columbia. ... The couple were introduced in 2006 by a mutual friend in Yardley, Pa." **With pic**
<http://nyti.ms/2rOtYMA>

BIRTHDAYS: Greta Van Susteren, the pride of Appleton, Wisconsin (hat tip: Tammy

Haddad) ... Tad Devine, the pride of Providence who lives on Block Island, is 62 ... Kim Oates of the House Radio/TV gallery ... Carrie Budoff Brown's older sister, Jennifer Budoff, budget director for the D.C. City Council ... former Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) is 87 ... Lindsey Williams Drath ... Jennifer Rubin ... Michael Timmeny, SVP for government and community relations at Cisco ... Jeremy Ben-Ami, president at J Street (h/ts Jon Haber) ... POLITICO's Reid Pillifant, Emily Dobler and Juliette Medina ... South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard is 64 ... Treasury alum David Cohen ... TJ Adams-Falconer, associate director of external affairs at Axios ... Rep. Mike Conaway (R-Tex.) is 69 ... Cesar Gonzalez, COS for Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart ... former Rep. Rick Renzi (R-Ariz.) is 59 ... DNC comms staffer and former HRC campaign media booker Lucas Acosta (h/t Crystal Carson) ...

... **Will Rahn**, managing editor for politics at CBS News digital, is 3-0 ... Jessica Franks, gov't affairs representative for Halliburton ... Politico Europe's Tanit Parada Tur ... Chris Campbell, Republican staff director at Senate Finance ... Kristina Edmunson ... Rachel Ruskin ... Obama alum Jonathan McBride, now a managing director at BlackRock ... Mike Schoenfeld, the Blue Devils' master of public affairs/Duke's other Mike ... Betsy Gotbaum, former NYC public advocate, is 79 ... Matt Chaban, policy director at Center for an Urban Future ... Mary Kate Cunningham ... Salesforce's Tom Gavin, an Obama WH OMB alum ... Michael Froehlich ... Caroline Barker ... Matthew Campbell ... Vanessa Chan, corporate comms. at Facebook ... Kelly Danielka Peirson ... Google's Ramya Raghavan ... Tom Alexander, COO at 1871 Chicago and a Rahm alum ... Jacque Vilmain, the pride of Eagle Grove, Iowa(h/t Teresa) ... animal rights activist Ingrid Newkirk is 68 ... Power Playbooker Dr. Oz is 57 ... actor Hugh Laurie is 58 ... Shia LaBeouf is 31 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years. Today, we employ more than 18,500 people across the country, covering nearly every state. Samsung Austin Semiconductor (SAS) hosts 6,000+ manufacturing and engineering jobs and has become a \$17bn investment - making it one of the largest single FDI's in the U.S. We're also committed to building strong communities through citizenship and support of programs for children's health, STEAM education, veterans and military families. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

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03/12/2018 07:58 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

THE GOP'S 11TH-HOUR BLITZ TO SAVE SACCONE -- You can't say Republicans didn't try to save Rick Saccone. The RNC deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors, a GOP super PAC launched an under-the-radar effort to diminish Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters and the powerful Koch network spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign -- not to mention President Donald Trump campaigned for him on Saturday. "The multi-million-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race," Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt report.

"A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds," they write. "It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race -- namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi -- are as potent as the party had hoped." Republicans had spent more than \$8 million on TV ads by the end of the weekend, though senior Republicans have cast Saccone as a lackluster candidate, criticizing him for leaning so heavily on the national party to run his campaign. More: <http://politi.co/2FGQkrb>

TRUMP RALLIES IN PA AHEAD OF SPECIAL ELECTION -- Trump urged voters in Pennsylvania over the weekend to elect Saccone in Tuesday's special election. While the campaign event seemed like more a reelection rally for the president than a rally to boost Saccone, Trump did stress that he needs more Republicans in office, calling the special election "a very important race" that the world is watching. "National and local Republicans hope Trump's visit will help stoke enthusiasm here in the final days ahead of Tuesday's special election," Elena Schneider and Brent D. Griffiths report.

"The race has drawn millions in outside spending as the GOP tries to avoid a disaster in a race that should have been an easy win -- and in which a loss would be widely read as a referendum on the president," they continue. "The visit was Trump's second, after a January appearance with Saccone by his side. Vice President Mike Pence, Kellyanne Conway and Ivanka Trump have all made stops in southwestern Pennsylvania in the past month. Donald Trump Jr. is expected to headline a rally on Monday." Public polling shows a neck-and-neck race. More: <http://politi.co/2FtrBau>

WHITE HOUSE BACKS CORNYN BILL IN GUN PLAN -- The White House is backing a pair of gun-control legislation: a bill by Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) to improve background checks for gun purchases and the STOP School

Violence Act, which would essentially repurpose a \$50 million Justice Department program focused on school safety. The White House on Sunday also expressed support for a DOJ program that would help states that seek to train teachers and other personnel to carry firearms and announced that Education Secretary Betsy DeVos will chair a federal commission on school safety.

"The administration said the commission will address issues such as whether to repeal Obama-era school discipline efforts, the impact of video games on youth violence and the effects of press coverage of mass violence," Kimberly Hefling and Michael Stratford report. "The proposal did not include calling for raising the age to 21 for the purchases of some rifles -- an idea Trump has said he backs. The senior administration official said the issue of how states are addressing the age restrictions will be addressed by the commission."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) criticized the administration's gun-safety plan for not going far enough to stop school violence. "The White House has taken tiny baby steps designed not to upset the NRA, when the gun violence epidemic in this country demands that giant steps be taken," Schumer said in a statement. "Democrats in the Senate will push to go further including passing universal background checks, actual federal legislation on protection orders, and a debate on banning assault weapons." More: <http://politi.co/2IgZp8B>

HAPPY MONDAY! Thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill, on this March 12.

FRIDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Roll Call's [report](#) on House Speaker Paul Ryan's (R-Wis.) plans to pursue a five- or six-bill infrastructure overhaul was the winner.

THE A.D.D. CONGRESS -- It's not just you who's struggling to keep up in the Trump era. "Every time it seems the president has zeroed in on an issue, and appears determined to see it through -- guns and immigration are just the two latest examples -- he moves on to something else," Burgess and Elana note. "And Congress, which isn't designed to respond swiftly to national events and the wishes of the White House even in the least distracted of circumstances, simply can't keep up. The constant whiplash of priorities is getting on lawmakers' nerves."

"We kind of have attention deficit disorder," Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.) conceded. Congress' attention span, added Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), is "a real problem." "The hyperactive mindset of the Oval Office has had the effect, whether by design or not, of quickly diverting attention from topics big or small," they report. "After a bout of attention on gun control in the wake of the Florida school massacre last month, Congress has seemingly moved on already. Before that, it was the plight of Dreamers facing deportation. In the end, nothing gets done on the issue of the day." Much more: <http://politi.co/2p7OxAY>

HOUSE TO VOTE TUESDAY ON RIGHT-TO-TRY BILL -- The House on Tuesday will vote on legislation aimed at allowing very sick patients to request access to treatments the FDA has yet to approve, a priority the president mentioned in his State of the Union address. "House Energy and Commerce Committee leaders had been working to change the bill, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent over the summer," Rachel Rouben reports for The Hill.

"Supporters of the measure, such as groups backed by conservative mega-donors Charles and David Koch, had been urging the House to pass the Senate version, fearing changes could make it harder for the bill to get to Trump's desk."

"The new version will indeed have to be sent back to the Senate," she adds. In a statement announcing Tuesday's vote, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said he looks forward "to swift Senate action so more Americans facing dire circumstances can find some light in their darkest moments." According to the House bill, "a patient must have a disease or a condition with a 'reasonable likelihood that death will occur within a matter of months' or would result in 'significant irreversible morbidity that is likely to lead to severely premature death'" to be eligible to request access to an experimental drug. More: <http://bit.ly/2p3rS9Z>

WARREN VS. DEMS -- Sen. Elizabeth Warren's (D-Mass.) attack last week on Senate Democrats who backed a banking deregulation bill "escalated a feud among the caucus' moderate and liberal members that's simmered all week long and underscores the ideological rift within the party as it tries to claw its way back to power," Elana and Burgess report. The liberal firebrand sent a fundraising email on Tuesday admonishing the 16 Democrats who voted to forge ahead on the bill for siding with Republicans and "the big banks." By Friday, "the back-and-forth got so heated that Warren's camp offered to pass on the small amount of money raised from the Tuesday email to benefit one or more of her moderate Democratic targets."

One Democratic aide said the offer was sarcastic. "But some moderate Democratic senators who argue the bill will boost smaller and community banks felt a sting of their own from Warren's attacks," they add. "They also happen to include seven of the caucus' 10 incumbents up for reelection in states Donald Trump won in 2016." But while being at odds with Warren may not be bad politics for some vulnerable red-state Democrats, aides to Democrats who supported the measure were frustrated. Some Democrats worry the internecine war will undermine the party ahead of the 2018 and 2020 elections. Much more: <http://politi.co/2tzp1KE>

Related: "Warren: 'I'm not running for president,'" by Brent D. Griffiths: <http://politi.co/2GjDyg6>; and "Sen. Jeff Flake: President Donald Trump should be challenged by a conservative like me," from The Arizona Republic's Dan Nowicki: <http://bit.ly/2FAdNaa>

VIALE REPUBLICANS PASS ON FEINSTEIN CHALLENGE -- Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) will face 31 opponents in her June 5 primary. But only one, Democrat Kevin de León, is a serious challenger. "The deadline came and went, and no prominent Republicans filed to run against" Feinstein, Sarah D. Wire reports. "Republicans weren't able to recruit a candidate with statewide name recognition, despite concerns that the lack of a standard bearer at the top of the ticket could keep GOP voters from turning out in November. Depressed turnout could hurt the party's chances of holding crucial congressional seats." Feinstein has significantly more money in the bank than de León, who has struggled to rival Feinstein's name recognition. But the top two vote-getters will face off in the general election, regardless of party. More: <http://lat.ms/2p3kbAp>

LIPINSKI'S PRIMARY STRUGGLE -- Despite beginning the year with six times more money than his progressive challenger, Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-Ill.) isn't spending campaign

dollars like he's facing the most daunting primary of his career. "While the conservative Democrat is under assault from the left by the best-organized and best-funded opponent he's faced, Lipinski sat nearly dormant on the airwaves for three weeks as newcomer Marie Newman leveled attacks," Natasha Korecki reports. Newman was first to air television ads during a critical period in the race, during which polls showed she made massive gains in name recognition.

"It's the latest illustration of Lipinski's struggle to hang on to his seat as longtime Democratic incumbents across the country face challengers from the left energized by the national political climate and the 2016 insurgent candidacy of Bernie Sanders," Korecki adds. "In the time Newman and supporters spent nearly \$300,000 on ads, Lipinski had responded with just \$54,000 in cable buys over two weeks. Lipinski launched his first sizable TV ad buy last week." More: <http://politi.co/2tE7H73>

GOP STRUGGLES TO HOLD SO-CAL SUBURBS -- Republicans hold four of six congressional seats in Orange County, California's third most populous county. Reps. Ed Royce (R-Calif.) and Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) are retiring, while Rep. Mimi Walters (R-Calif.) faces "the fight of her political career" and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) has become "a Democratic target partially thanks to special counsel Robert Mueller's interest in him and his chats with Julian Assange," Gabriel Debenedetti reports. At least 18 serious Democrats are running for one of the four seats. "The county is heavily, and famously, suburban, and the GOP is losing ground fast in areas like it," he warns. "When Hillary Clinton won Orange County by beating Trump in 2016, she became the first Democrat to do so in 80 years." Much more: <http://politi.co/2tEK6TO>

MOVING UP AND MOVING ON -- Elena Kuhn has been promoted to press adviser in House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) press operation. Kuhn previously served as senior press assistant.

Joseph Cortina has left House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer's (D-Md.) office. He will join the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America in April as director of federal government affairs.

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- The Senate meets at 4 p.m. to resume consideration of a banking bill. The chamber will hold a procedural vote at 5:30 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2DkIQ7R>
The House is out.

FRIDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- Mike Amery was first to correctly guess that Rep. Frances Payne Bolton (R-Ohio) and her son, Rep. Oliver Bolton (R-Ohio), are the only mother and son to serve together in the House. Frances Bolton succeeded her late husband, Rep. Chester Bolton (R-Ohio), and is also the granddaughter of Sen. Henry Payne (D-Ohio).

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- Excluding Vermont, what is the last state to have a Republican, Democrat and independent in the state's two Senate seats and governor's mansion, and who were the officeholders? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way: nmccaskill@politico.com.

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To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/03/12/can-republicans-save-saccone-congress-attention-deficit-disorder-house-to-vote-on-right-to-try-bill-tuesday-top-republicans-forgo-feinstein-challenge-253272>

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From: Donald J. Trump
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 6:17:32 PM
Subject: Turning off the noise

This is so necessary. So important. |

Friend,

Politicians have spent too much time bickering and not enough time listening.
Enough!

I want to hear from YOU.

I want to hear from the American heartland -- the REAL America that lives outside of the DC-media fantasy bubble.

Now that we've passed the six-month mark of our presidency, I want you to take the Listening to America Survey to tell me the true sentiments, concerns, and interests of REAL America.

The mainstream media and Hollywood love to tell you "how America is feeling." But they know nothing. They live in a world where you get to keep your job even if you fail to get anything done.

It's time to tune them out. It's time to shut off the noise and just LISTEN.

Just like on the campaign, I always like to go directly to the people. I asked our supporters to help prepare for our three big debates against Hillary. I asked what issues we should address. I asked for help creating our platform.

So please take this moment to turn off the very loud noise of Washington and take the Listening to America Survey.

Thank you,

Donald J. Trump

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sun 8/20/2017 2:57:06 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD): MATTIS on NEW AFGHANISTAN strategy -- SNEAK PEEK: REMNICK on Trump -- BANNON to WaPo: 'No administration in history has been so divided' -- ELISE STEFANIK's wedding

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)
08/20/2017 10:54 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

BULLETIN -- NYT'S MICHAEL GORDON in Amman, Jordan: "Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said that President Trump, who had been accused by lawmakers of dragging his feet on Afghanistan, had settled on a new strategy after a 'rigorous' review.

"The president has made a decision,' Mr. Mattis told reporters on an overnight flight that arrived in Amman ... on Sunday. 'I am very comfortable that the strategic process was sufficiently rigorous.' Mr. Mattis received the authority in June to send nearly 4,000 troops to Afghanistan so that the United States military could expand its efforts to advise Afghan forces and support them with American artillery and air power. But Mr. Mattis had refrained from building up the American force there until the Trump administration settled on a broader strategy. Mr. Mattis declined to say what steps the president had ordered, including troop levels. He added that Mr. Trump wanted to announce the details to the American people, and that the president was expected to do so in coming days. ...

"The decision to send troops is just one component of a strategy that is also expected to outline ways to pressure Pakistan to shut down the sanctuaries that the Taliban and other extremist groups have maintained on its territory. 'It is a South Asia strategy; it not just an Afghanistan strategy,' Mr. Mattis said." <http://nyti.ms/2x2TxKm>

Good Sunday morning. SNEAK PEEK -- DAVID REMNICK in the New Yorker, coming out tomorrow: "Early last November, just before Election Day, Barack Obama was driven through the crisp late-night gloom of the outskirts of Charlotte, as he barnstormed North Carolina on behalf of Hillary Clinton. ... During his speech in Charlotte that night, Obama warned that no one really changes in the Presidency;

rather, the office 'magnifies' who you already are. So if you 'accept the support of Klan sympathizers before you're President, or you're kind of slow in disowning it, saying, 'Well, I don't know,' then that's how you'll be as President.'" <http://bit.ly/2ihQqes> ... **A look inside the magazine** <http://bit.ly/2vPCKvX>

-- **WORTH NOTING:** Obama has not publicly responded to Trump's comments post-Charlottesville except to post a tweet quoting Nelson Mandela.

MARK LANDLER and MAGGIE HABERMAN: "With Bannon's Ouster, Question Remains Whether His Agenda Will Be Erased, Too" <http://nyti.ms/2x2QKRw>

-- **JOSH DAWSEY and MATT NUSSBAUM:** "The departures from Trump's White House have come at a dizzying pace in recent weeks: multiple communications directors, the chief of staff and the press secretary have all left, along with top aides on the national security council and a number of CEOs from influential business councils. But none of the departures are likely to change the dynamics as much as that of the polarizing Bannon, whose ouster on Friday could alienate conservatives, hearten some who feared his brand of populism-nationalism, and dial down the fights inside 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

"Bannon is the intellectual heart and soul of the Trump movement," said Mark Corallo, a prominent GOP operative who served briefly as the spokesperson for Trump's private legal team. 'He was the think tank. He's the idea generator. ... He was the guy who was the most thoughtful about how to enact the agenda, how to build a coalition.'" <http://politi.co/2vdOox4>

BREITBART'S LEAD STORY -- "Report: Powerful GOP Donor Sheldon Adelson Supports Campaign to Oust McMaster" <http://bit.ly/2vPDzET>

-- **BANNON SPEAKS** to Bob Costa and John Wagner, who reported from Bedminster: "If the Republican Party on Capitol Hill gets behind the president on his plans and not theirs, it will all be sweetness and light, be one big happy family,' Bannon said. ... 'No administration in history has been so divided among itself about the direction about where it should go,' Bannon said, adding that Trump's base is frustrated by a congressional agenda that has dovetailed more with traditional Republican priorities than the agenda Trump championed." <http://wapo.st/2wepaDo>

--**"Breitbart bullish on Bannon return, promises 'aggressive expansion,'"** by Cristiano Lima: "Breitbart News is riding high amid its reunion with executive chairman Steve Bannon. ... 'I think we definitely are planning on stepping up our game,' Breitbart News Washington editor Matthew Boyle said during the outlet's weekly SiriusXM show on Saturday. '[W]e're planning a lot of aggressive expansion and much more aggressive reporting than we've already been doing ... We've been a pirate ship without a captain for a year ... We're thrilled to have our captain back.'" <http://politi.co/2xfu5AT>

THERE WE GO! -- DAILY MAIL SAYS IVANKA AND JARED PUSHED BANNON

OUT: "How Jewish convert Ivanka got 'Bannon the Barbarian' to go: Trump's daughter 'helped to force out' aide blamed over President's failure to condemn neo-Nazi rally ... Chief strategist Bannon, 63, helped orchestrate the President's election victory ... But many blamed him for Trump's failure last week to condemn neo-Nazis ... 'Pushed out' by daughter Ivanka and her husband because of his far-Right views": <http://dailym.ai/2v3rp8p>

-- FRONT PAGE OF THE BALTIMORE SUN: "Jared Kushner's firm seeks arrest of Maryland tenants to collect debt," by Doug Donovan: "The real estate company owned by Jared Kushner, son-in-law and top adviser to President Donald Trump, has been the most aggressive in Maryland in using a controversial debt-collection tactic: getting judges to order the arrest of people who owe his company money. Since 2013, the first full year in which the Kushner Cos. operated in Maryland, corporate entities affiliated with the firm's 17 apartment complexes in the state have sought the civil arrest of 105 former tenants for failing to appear in court to face allegations of unpaid debt, The Baltimore Sun has found." <http://bsun.md/2weo36H>

-- TIMES OF ISRAEL: "Abbas says Trump administration 'in chaos'": "Each time they reiterate their commitment to a two-state solution and the stop to settlement building, Abbas says. 'I urge them to tell Netanyahu that, but they are deterred.' 'I don't even know how they are dealing with us, because his entire administration is in chaos,' he adds." <http://bit.ly/2uVkvWM>

MNUCHIN RESPONDS TO CRITICS IN HIS YALE CLASS -- via Zach Warmbrodt: "I don't believe the allegations against the president are accurate. I believe that having highly talented men and women in our country surrounding the president in his administration should be reassuring to you and all the American people." **Mnuchin's full statement** <http://bit.ly/2v3Q0tY>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** If you know only one fact about rising drug costs, know this one: drug makers set prices for prescription drugs. To help manage nearly double-digit price increases, employers, unions and government programs use PBMs to negotiate lower net prices to help curb costs for employers and patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

NEW POLL -- "Trump's Job Rating Is Below 40 Percent in Three Key Midwest States," by NBC's Mark Murray: "President Donald Trump's job-approval rating in the three states that helped propel him to the White House - Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin - stands below 40 percent, according to a trio of NBC News/Marist polls of these key states in the Midwest. In addition, Democrats enjoy double-digit leads in Michigan and Pennsylvania on the question of which party voters prefer to control Congress after the 2018 midterms, and they hold an 8-point advantage in Wisconsin.

"And in all three states, more than six-in-10 voters say Trump's conduct as president has embarrassed them, versus just a quarter who have said it's made them proud. These three NBC/Marist polls were conducted Aug. 13-17 - after the August 12 unrest

and violence in Charlottesville, Va., as well as in the midst of President Trump's multiple responses to that unrest and violence." <http://nbcnews.to/2v3zs58>

ABOUT YESTERDAY ... -- BOSTON GLOBE FRONT PAGE: "MAKING A STAND AGAINST RACISM ... Resolute and ready, they marched ... Rally by tens of thousands is peaceful but pointed" -- **A1 pdf** <http://bit.ly/2ve082l>

-- **"'Free speech' rally speakers, little heard, end event quickly,"** by the Boston Globe's Beth Healy: "By 12:45 p.m., only 45 minutes into their official program, organizers of the Boston Free Speech rally ended the event and were escorted by police out of the park, to chants of 'Go home, Nazis' from the crowd. A Facebook post for the event listed 14 speakers and was scheduled to last for two hours." <http://bit.ly/2fX8NEr>

-- **@realDonaldTrump:** "Great job by all law enforcement officers and Boston Mayor @Marty_Walsh. Our great country has been divided for decades. Sometimes you need protest in order to heal, & we will heal, & be stronger than ever before! I want to applaud the many protesters in Boston who are speaking out against bigotry and hate. Our country will soon come together as one!"

... AND IN CHICAGO: "7 shot, 1 fatally, in West Pullman attack among 33 shot in 13 hours," by the Chicago Tribune's Elva Malagon and Denease Williams-Harris. <http://trib.in/2v32Zfp>

WHAT OTTAWA WANTS YOU TO READ -- "The Trump Unit: Inside Canada's PMO squad to save NAFTA," by the National Post's Alexander Panetta: "The Canadian government has created an election-style nerve centre to handle White House-related challenges and officials who describe its operations say it has about eight regular staff: two former trade officials, two senior PMO officials, an ambassador, a writer, a cabinet minister, and it's run by a young staffer with a reputation for staying cool while smothering political fires.

"The most blistering inferno it's preparing to confront is a scenario where the president threatens NAFTA. Everybody involved anticipates the threat level from Trump will rise with the heat of negotiations. A well-connected Washington lobbyist milling about last week's talks said a Trump pullout threat is virtually assured: 'Almost 100 per cent.' Trade lawyer Dan Ujcz said it's a logical play for the president: 'The threat of withdrawal is his key negotiating leverage.'" <http://bit.ly/2wlnOad>

GREAT STORY -- ANNIE KARNI on NEWT GINGRICH: "Newt Gingrich goes to spouse school": "Last week, Newt Gingrich sat in a classroom surrounded by 11 women and one other man, furiously jotting notes. In the weeklong intensive, where classes ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with only a short cafeteria lunch break in between, the former House Speaker and onetime presidential candidate received a crash course in a new role: invisible spouse. When he moves to Rome with his third wife, Callista Gingrich, to become husband of the Ambassador to the Holy See, the ubiquitous Fox

News talking head, will have no official diplomatic role abroad, beyond being generally presentable and essentially not heard from.

"It will be a challenge for an outspoken sometimes-booster, sometimes-critic of the Trump administration, who said he does not plan to terminate his contract with Fox News. But like former President Bill Clinton during his wife's two bids for the presidency, Gingrich will be taking on the secondary role of booster after a public life spent demanding the limelight. Aware that this new, less celebrated, role will take some getting used to, Gingrich eagerly enrolled himself in what he referred to, excitedly, as 'spouse school.'

"The program, run by the State Department and hosted on the Arlington campus of the Foreign Service Institute, was started in the 1950s, when it was referred to simply as the 'Wives Seminar.' Over the years, a State Department official said, it 'has evolved into a variety of training and orientation programs for foreign affairs family members.' Today, topics include: 'expectations and personal goals for your time overseas,' 'post morale,' 'the official residence,' 'navigating a public diplomacy role,' 'legal issues and ethics,' as well as 'stress management.'" <http://politi.co/2x2pnHI>

WHAT AMERICA IS READING ... -- THE BIRMINGHAM (ALA.) NEWS: "With Jones, Democrats dreaming big again: 'Mount Rushmore of political upsets'" <http://bit.ly/2iguP5O> ... **ARIZONA REPUBLIC:** "Sign of respect for the eclipse: Navajos won't be watching 'sacred communication' between sun and moon" <http://bit.ly/2x3k8XK> ... **CHARLOTTE OBSERVER:** "HERITAGE OR 'SHAMEFUL HISTORY'?": Gastonia's Confederate monument, one of dozens standing quietly on N.C. public property, inspires loyalty even as people question its message" <http://bit.ly/2vPqZ8F> ... **JANESVILLE (WIS.) GAZETTE:** "Now available: One-fourth of business space vacant in downtown Janesville." <http://bit.ly/2wtHAjd>

-- RARE: INDIANAPOLIS STAR FULL FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL: "LET'S STAND AGAINST HATE. TOGETHER" <http://bit.ly/2vPTuTS>

REMEMBERING ARTHUR FINKELSTEIN - NYT's Sam Roberts: "Finkelstein, a reclusive political Svengali who revolutionized campaign polling and financing and helped elect a bevy of conservative candidates, including President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, died on Friday night in Ipswich, Mass., where he lived. He was 72. ... Mr. Finkelstein was among the first political strategists in the late 1970s to grasp the potential of a United States Supreme Court ruling that allowed putatively independent political committees to spend money on behalf of individual candidates and causes. ... He also pioneered sophisticated demographic analyses of primary voters and methodical exit polling, and of using a marketing strategy, called microtargeting, to identify specific groups of potential supporters of a candidate regardless of their party affiliation." <http://nyti.ms/2xfq2En> ... **Statement by his family** <http://bit.ly/2ihkjeR> ... **National Review profile** <http://bit.ly/2we3uqY>

-- AP: "Comedian, civil rights activist Dick Gregory dies," by Daisy Nguyen: "Dick

Gregory, the comedian and activist and who broke racial barriers in the 1960s and used his humor to spread messages of social justice and nutritional health, has died. He was 84. Gregory died late Saturday in Washington, D.C. after being hospitalized for about a week, his son Christian Gregory told The Associated Press. He had suffered a severe bacterial infection. As one of the first black standup comedians to find success with white audiences, in the early 1960s, Gregory rose from an impoverished childhood in St. Louis to win a college track scholarship and become a celebrated satirist who deftly commented upon racial divisions at the dawn of the civil rights movement."

<http://bit.ly/2fWy16a>

SUNDAY BEST -- JAKE TAPPER talks to **OHIO GOV. JOHN KASICH** on CNN's **"STATE OF THE UNION": TAPPER:** "If everything continues like it has been, does a Republican need to step forward to challenge President Trump in three years?"

KASICH: "Well, Jake, as you said, I don't have any plans to do anything like that. I'm rooting for him to get it together. We all are. We're only like seven months into this presidency. ... What we have to start thinking about, all of us, not just the president, but down where we live, in the neighborhoods, in the communities, we've gotta build a stronger America. Look, why am I on this show. You asked me to come on.

"I'm trying to have a responsible voice. To call things out when they need to be called out, but also to support my country. So what I hope is going to happen ... I hope we're going to have stability, the president is going to learn from these episodes and we're going to do better. That's what I hope is going to happen. We'll have to wait and see."

-- FOX NEWS SUNDAY: "Trump ally blast congressional leaders," by Kyle Cheney: "A top ally of President Donald Trump offered hints Sunday of a coming war on Republican leaders in Congress, a battle presaged by the return of former chief strategist Steve Bannon to Breitbart News.

"'There's a lack of leadership on one side of Pennsylvania Avenue,' said David Bossie, a former Trump campaign adviser, appearing on 'Fox News Sunday.' Bossie, who said he's spoken to Bannon 'many times' in recent days, said Bannon's departure from the administration will help the administration at 'leaning into Congress.' He repeatedly decried a 'failure of leadership in the House and Senate.' 'Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan have to step up,' Bossie said, adding, 'The House and Senate leadership has not bought into the president's agenda fully.'" <http://politi.co/2vdLIF0>

-- SEN. TIM KAINE talks to **JOHN DICKERSON** on **CBS'S "FACE THE NATION"** about Robert E. Lee's statue in the Capitol: "Every state gets two statues to put in Statuary Hall or throughout the capital. Just using Virginia as an example. The state gets to choose two people to represent the entire scope of the state's history. Virginia obviously chose George Washington, the father of the country. But the second choice that was made in 1909, and has never been changed, is Robert E. Lee.

"I think as you look at the scope of Virginia history here in 2017, and if you want there

to be two people to really stand for who Virginia is, why wouldn't you think about Pocahontas who, had she not saved John Smith's life, we wouldn't even be here possibly? Why wouldn't you think about a Barbara Johns, who led a school walkout in Prince Edward County that ultimately became part of the Brown versus Board, desegregation decision? Why wouldn't you think about Governor Wilder, the grandson of a slave, a decorated Korean War combat veteran, who became the first elected African-American governor in the history of the country? I think from 2017 looking backward, I think Virginia could probably do better in the two people that we choose to stand for us in Statuary Hall. And I think a number of the other states can do better as well."

-- **SIREN: @facethenation:** Sen. Scott: "As we look to the future it's going to be very difficult for POTUS to lead. His moral authority remains compromised."

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Protesters face off with riot police escorting conservative activists following a march in Boston on Aug. 20 against a planned 'Free Speech Rally' just one week after the violent 'Unite the Right' rally in Virginia. | Spencer Platt/Getty Images

JAKE'S TIP OF THE DAY -- WEAR THESE SHOES (Allbirds are kind of great) -- **NYT**
Style: "To Fit Into Silicon Valley, Wear These Wool Shoes," by Nellie Bowles.
<http://nyti.ms/2vdNlaQ>

DEPT. OF TAX REFORM IS HARD -- "Left warns Democrats in tax reform fight," by Elana Schor: "Liberal activists who hounded the GOP throughout its failed Obamacare repeal bid are gearing up to hit any Democrat who strays from the fold on tax cuts for the wealthy - including some of the party's most politically vulnerable incumbents. Democrats were spared the sight of their progressive base battling centrists on Obamacare, which proved a uniquely unifying issue for both wings of the party. But there's no guarantee that taxes will be another kumbaya moment for Democratic leaders, who have long struggled to contain tensions between red-state lawmakers facing tough reelections and a grassroots emboldened by resistance to President Donald Trump's agenda. ...

"Liberal groups are vowing to fight the GOP tax bill as hard as they battled Obamacare repeal. They're expecting Democrats to stand together against any legislation that cuts taxes for the rich, even if it also trims tax bills for others. And they're prepared to unleash their energized grassroots on any lawmaker who doesn't get on board."
<http://politi.co/2wlrI8H>

IMPORTANT -- THE HILL'S BEN KAMISAR: "The Republican National Committee

expanded its massive fundraising lead over the Democratic National Committee in July as the Democrats posted their worst July haul in a decade. The DNC raised just \$3.8 million in July, compared to the \$10.2 million raised by the RNC in the same month. While the GOP has no debt, the DNC added slightly to its debt in July, which now sits at \$3.4 million." <http://bit.ly/2uUsZxC>

THE OPPOSITION -- "Amateur sleuths hunt for Trump bombshells," by Darren Samuelsohn: "Nearly 3,000 miles from special counsel Robert Mueller's Washington offices, another investigation into President Donald Trump is underway. This one unfolds in the public libraries and coffee shops of San Francisco, where a self-employed 40-year-old named Geoff Andersen has worked since November for 16 hours a day, seven days a week, burning through nearly \$45,000 in personal savings and donations from friends and family in pursuit of hidden truths about Trump's rise to power. ... Andersen is not alone in his largely solitary quest. Countless amateur sleuths are on the case, from a short-order cook in Belfast whose research was recently cited by the Daily Beast to a Florida art teacher who tells POLITICO he is applying his pattern-recognition skills to Trump's sprawling business empire.

"Undaunted by a lack of subpoena power or search warrants, and the government's vast legal and technical expertise, countless people like these are poring through Trump's personal and business records, as well as overlooked 2016 campaign clues. They share their findings through email, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and even tips to reporters and the FBI. Most labor in obscurity, but all are motivated by the lottery-like odds of a discovery that has eluded journalists and prosecutors but which just might bring down a president." <http://politi.co/2fW575P>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :** Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers and other health care purchasers; however, the list price - the important starting point for those negotiations -- continues to rise, at a rate of nearly ten percent in 2016 alone. Increased competition, faster reviews of generics and biosimilars and ending anti-competitive practices can also bring down the cost of medications for patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

VALLEY READ -- KARA SWISHER: "Jeff Immelt has emerged as the front-runner to become Uber's CEO": "While the tension on the board of the car-hailing company remains high - due of late to an ugly lawsuit that one of its major investors, Benchmark, is waging against its ousted co-founder and CEO Travis Kalanick - sources said that a majority of the board is coalescing around the experienced Immelt.

"That could certainly change, said sources, and there are two other executives who are also still being considered, neither of whom is a woman, as some had hoped. Sources said a vote of Uber's directors is likely to happen within the next two weeks, which does not have to be unanimous, although most directors are hoping it will be. In any case, Immelt has pulled ahead, said several sources. One of Immelt's earliest and strongest supporters on the board is Arianna Huffington, said sources, but he is also the

top choice of several directors. Others still undecided - including Benchmark, which has weakened its status because of the lawsuit and ensuing publicity - have become convinced that Uber needs to hire someone who can quickly deal with a number of pressing and problematic issues and consider Immelt fully capable of handling that well." <http://bit.ly/2vPtw2O>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Jersey Gov. Chris Christie no longer a candidate to replace Mike Francesa at WFAN," by N.Y. Daily News' Bob Raissman: "Scratch Chris Christie off the list of candidates to replace Mike (Sports Pope) Francesa when he leaves WFAN (if he actually does) in December. FAN sources said the suits searching for Francesa's replacement have informed the New Jersey Governor his Gasbag services will not be needed." <http://nydn.us/2vUASAc>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman, filing from Nantucket:

--**"After The Flame,"** by Wayne Drehs and Mariana Lajolo in ESPN the Magazine: "The 2016 Summer Games were supposed to bring Rio and Brazil to new financial and athletic heights. What's left behind? A city and country shrouded by corruption, debt and broken promises." <http://es.pn/2vGuvCn>

--**"A Brief History of Traveling With Cats,"** by Jackie Mansky in Smithsonian: "Fierce felines of history sailed the world, survived Europe's crusade against them and made it all the way to Memedom." <http://bit.ly/2uTzyfG>

--**"Bangalore, before the dystopia,"** by Harish C Menon in Quartz - per The Browser's description: "Bangalore has gone from Garden City to Garbage City in 30 years. Renowned as the tech hub of India, producing 10% of India's GDP, the city is 'a disaster in slow motion'. Population and area have tripled with little in the way of planning or infrastructure. Green spaces and watercourses have been concreted over. Quality of life has fallen to the lowest of all Indian cities. Residents 'grapple with self-combusting foaming toxic lakes'. By 2025 Bangalore 'will be simply uninhabitable.'" <http://bit.ly/2v4ADAs>

--**"Y'all Sent Me to Washington at an Interesting Time,"** by The Atlantic's Molly Ball: "A freshman Republican lawmaker [Jim Banks] tries to stay on the right side of his constituents-and his principles-deep in Trump Country." <http://theatltn.tc/2v4ruZ0>

--**"What the Heck Is Guam? A Guide for the Perplexed,"** by Shannon Togawa Mercer in Lawfare: "It sits almost 1,500 miles south of Japan and around 2,100 miles from North Korea. ... According to historians, Guam was discovered and populated by Austronesian peoples around 4,000 years ago. Guam got a jump on contact with Europeans when Ferdinand Magellan stumbled upon Guam in 1521." <http://bit.ly/2wjhGOQ>

--**"The partition goes on: A Pakistani perspective,"** by Mohammed Hanif on Al-Jazeera: "Like many Pakistanis I saw my first Indians in London and was surprised that they were a bit like us. Most Indians and Pakistanis have the same reaction when they

meet. It seems as if they are brought up to believe that a community of ferals lives across the border. The most we know about each other is from moving images from films and songs, and a bit from books." <http://es.pn/2vGuvCn>

--**"James Baldwin's Istanbul,"** by Suzy Hansen in PublicBooks: "Baldwin was delighted by the Turkish custom of holding hands - even men could be openly affectionate. It was easier to be gay in Istanbul than in America, and easier to be black ... [The city was] a place anyone could go to live and feel free." <http://bit.ly/2fO2Vxi>

--**"What should you do when two ISIS suspects are interrogated right before your eyes?"** by Anthony Loyd in the New Statesman: "I felt intrigued but uncomfortable, watching it all unfold, the bound and kneeling men waiting for the whip or worse. I knew that if I left the room both prisoners would get thrashed for sure, and likely tortured. If I stayed, they might get thrashed anyway, in front of me, which might have implied my acquiescence. But I also wanted to know what would happen. It was awkward either way." <http://bit.ly/2fNROEt>

--**"The Fight of His Life,"** by Brian Castner in Esquire: "Afghan Army Captain Noorullah Aminyar was once a valuable ally to the American military. But after a failed defection attempt and three years in detention, his asylum claim now rests on the argument that the U.S. has lost its longest war." <http://bit.ly/2wdhWQi> (h/t Longreads.com)

--**"Mr. Nice Guy,"** by Wired's Nicholas Thompson: "Instagram's Kevin Systrom wants to clean up the &#%\$@! Internet." <http://bit.ly/2wdqIU0>

--**"My Life Lessons in Rust Belt Racism,"** by Kim Kingsley on Medium: <http://bit.ly/2xfTcU0>

--**"The White Lies of Craft Culture,"** by Lauren Michele Jackson in Eater: "How the world of small batch, single origin, and totally artisanal erases the people of color who made it possible." <http://bit.ly/2fUeLG>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) at Cisco Brewery on Friday on Nantucket ... John King on an American Airlines flight from DCA to Nantucket on Saturday morning.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- "Elise Stefanik, Matthew Manda" -- N.Y. Times: "Ms. Stefanik, 33, is a United States congresswoman, representing the 21st District of New York. She is a Republican serving on the House Armed Services Committee; the Committee on Education and the Workforce; and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Elected in 2014 at age 30, she is the youngest woman elected to Congress in United States history. Previously she served in the Office of the Chief of Staff in the White House under President George W. Bush. She graduated from

Harvard. ...

"Mr. Manda, 34, is the marketing and communications director in Alexandria, Va., for the Media Group of America, which owns and operates the media outlet Independent Journal Review. Previously he was the communications director for Representative Kevin Yoder, Republican of Kansas, and as the political director for 2010 campaign for Senator Jerry Moran, Republican of Kansas. The groom graduated from the University of Kansas. ... The couple met through mutual friends in January 2012 at a party hosted by the bride in Washington." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2wlkegi>

-- **Pool report**: "At the Hall of Springs in Saratoga State Park, guests noshed on Baby lamb chops, a raw bar pork belly sliders, potato pancakes, antipasti in honor of the bride's Italian roots, a Cannoli bar and a gelato bar. The Bride and groom had a choreographed dance to 'Can't Take My Eyes Off You.' The father and daughter dance was to Hamilton's 'Dear Theodosia.'" **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2x2Paix> ... <http://bit.ly/2fWc3Qv>

SPOTTED: Russ Schriefer and Nina Easton, Lenny and Amelia Chassé Alcivar, Ryan Coyne, Joel and Laura Cox Kaplan, Anita and Tim McBride, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), Reps. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.), Will Hurd (R-Texas), Chris Collins (R-N.Y.), Mimi Walters (R-Calif.), David Young (R-Idaho), John Katko (R-N.Y.), Susan Brooks (R-Ind.) and Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), New York State Assemblyman Dan Stec, NY State Conservative Party Chair Mike Long, Megan and Tyler Foote, Phil Musser, Mike Leavitt, Tom and Corinne Hoare, Lindley and Dustin Sherer, Aly and Graham Wheeler, Ali and Stuart Siciliano, and Anthony Katie Pileggi.

-- **Jonathan Nabavi**, vice president of public policy and government affairs at the NFL, and **Catherine Hansen**, who works on congressional relations at Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, were married Saturday in Bar Harbor. **NYT announcement with pic** <http://nyti.ms/2vdRW2h> ... **Wedding pic** <http://bit.ly/2xfxklj> **SPOTTED**: Andrew Kovalcin, Rebecca and Matt Haller, Bradley Hayes, Adriana Brizuela and Chris Gindlesperger, Nicole Gustafson, Ali Tulbah and Alana Nolan, Sergio Rodriguera, Allison O'Brien, Nat and Melissa Sillin, Dan Finucane and Danielle Bruccheri and Sean Fairchild.

ENGAGED -- Andrea Saul, who works on communications at Facebook and was national press secretary for Romney 2012, got engaged on Saturday to **David Nosbusch**, who works in business development at Box and is a Harvard Business School grad. He proposed on the 18th green at 3 Creek Ranch in Jackson Hole, with friends and family nearby. They met through mutual friends watching college football at NorthStar Cafe in San Francisco.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Krista Zuzenak, co-founder of mKz Inc and member of Team Pelosi, and **Brian Zuzenak**, partner at Moxie Media and member of Team McAuliffe, "welcomed their 3rd roommate Isabelle Emma on [Friday]. Isabelle weighed 7 pounds 4 ounces and despite many bets that Baby Z was a boy she surprised and melted the hearts of her parents, family and friends. The couple fell in love across departments at the DCCC and can't wait to introduce her to the entire Pelosi/McAuliffe

Family." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2uVun37>

BIRTHDAYS: Fox News's Fin Gomez, celebrating in Iceland running a half marathon ... Lea Berman ... Chuck Campion, chairman and co-founder of Dewey Square Group (hat tips: Rick Ahearn) ... Jenny Backus ... Amb. Michael Froman, a distinguished fellow at CFR and former USTR, is 55 (h/t Andrew Bates) ... Brad Fingerroot ... Politico's Doug Palmer ... Scott Rothrock, CTO at advanced-manufacturing company Xometry and a Politico alum ... BPI birthday twins: partner Ben LaBolt and COO Ann Marie Habershaw (h/ts Jen Nedeau and Addie Whisenant) ... Al Roker is 63 ... former Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) is 82 ... former Sen. George Mitchell (D-Maine) is 84 ... Targeted Victory co-founder Zac Moffatt ... Connie Chung ... Rae-Lynn Ziegler, director of social media and outreach for the Washington Free Beacon (h/t Anton Vuljaj) ... Rachel Thomas, who works on external relations, gov't and regulatory affairs at IBM ... Susan Aspey ... Kendell (Coletti) Mountain ... Gina Keeney, partner at Lawler, Metzger, Keeney & Logan and a FCC alum (h/t Jon Haber) ... Brianna McCullough ... Rep. Brad Schneider (D-Ill.) is 56 (h/t Josh Brown) ... Rep. Kathy Castor (D-Fla.) is 51 ... Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) is 55. He's celebrating by grilling burgers with his family at home and his three dogs. ... former Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-Tex.) is 77 ... Tarrah Cooper, managing director at Mercury ... Matt Shapanka is 3-0 ... Morgan Murtaugh ... Jody Serrano (h/t Amy Sisk) ... Alice Frost Richardson ...

... **CNN senior media reporter Oliver Darcy** ... Jim Hock, adviser at PSP Capital and former Commerce COS ... Meghan Grant ... Madeline Shepherd, associate director of federal policy at Council for a Strong America (h/t Rachel Wein) ... Gordon Neal ... Hayley Herrin (Peterson), senior correspondent at Business Insider ... Patrick Drahi is 54 ... Matthew Gould is 46 ... David Ryan Adelman is 36 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Pat Collier IV, policy director at JB Pritzker for Governor ... Jeff Morehouse is 37 ... Angelica Alatorre ... Nicholas Himebaugh ... Kenny Swab ... Jordan Kittleson ... Shannon Travis ... Linnea Dyer Hegarty ... Katie Peters, comms director for Americans for Responsible Solutions ... Casey Badmington ... Eleni Roumel ... Steve Pfrang ... Shannon Harris ... Ari Goldberg, VP of comms at First Focus, is 44 ... Faryar Shirzad ... Jen Brown ... Lona Valmoro ... Bob Hudek ... Ryan O'Keefe (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD) :**

The high prices that drug makers set for prescription drugs can put financial strain on patients, employers, unions and others who provide health care coverage to more than 50 percent of Americans. Pharmacy benefit managers negotiate the lowest net price for prescriptions on behalf of employers, unions and government programs. But, as list prices - the starting point for those negotiations -- continue their nearly double-digit increases, the effects ripple throughout the system. The key to ensuring greater access and affordability lies in fostering greater competition. Facilitating faster reviews of generics and biosimilars, identifying off-patent drugs with little or no generic competition, and ending anti-competitive practices that keep safe, effective alternatives out of the market are also key to abating rising drug costs for patients. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

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Sent: Sat 6/10/2017 1:55:24 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Samsung: TRUMP to rollback some of Obama's Cuba policies -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Kellyanne complains about West Wing colleagues -- REMEMBERING Zbig Brzezinski -- ASHCROFT hired by Qatar -- KATY TUR profile -- B'DAY: Zeleny

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06/10/2017 09:52 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. THE BELMONT STAKES is 6:37 p.m. tonight on NBC.

WE HEAR ... PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP is going to roll back some of Barack Obama's changes to Cuba policy next week. He discussed the changes at a dinner with members of Congress earlier this week -- the dinner included Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, who was sharply critical of Obama's policy change. The White House didn't respond to a request for comment, but Marc Caputo and Sergio Bustos -- our POLITICO colleagues in Florida -- report he'll make the announcement in Miami and also note: "Many expect that Trump will not reverse Obama's decision to open a U.S. embassy in Havana or reinstate the 'wet-foot/dry-foot' policy that allowed Cuban immigrants who touched U.S. shores to become legal residents." <http://politi.co/2rX4B9K>

YOUR DAILY HEAD SNAP -- "Trump seems to undercut Tillerson's remarks on Qatar," by WaPo's Karen DeYoung and Sudarsan Raghavan: "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called on a Saudi Arabia-led bloc of Arab nations Friday to immediately ease their blockade of Qatar and urged all involved in the week-long Persian Gulf dispute to quickly resolve their differences, remarks that President Trump seemed to undercut less than an hour later.

"Trump began a Rose Garden news conference with the visiting president of Romania by saying that the Saudi-led action against Qatar was 'hard but necessary.' He said he had been consulted in advance by nations that 'spoke to me about confronting Qatar,' a country he said historically has been a 'funder of terrorism at a very high level.' He said he had decided, along with Tillerson and 'our great generals and military people, the time had come to call on Qatar to end that funding ... and its extremist ideology.'

"Earlier, in a brief, formal statement at the State Department, Tillerson had called on Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to ease their blockade, warning that it was causing humanitarian hardship in Qatar, harming U.S. and international business, and hindering U.S. military actions against the Islamic State." <http://wapo.st/2r549oV>

-- **ANOTHER STRANGE MOMENT** from Friday's press conference with **TRUMP** and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis. **REPORTER:** "Thank you. Mr. President, were there any discussion about the Visa Waiver Program for Romania? Is there a time frame for including our country in this program? Thank you." **TRUMP:** "We didn't discuss it --" **IOHANNIS:** "Yes --" **TRUMP:** "We didn't discuss it. But there would be certainly -- it would be something we will discuss. Mr. President." **IOHANNIS:** "I mentioned this issue, and I also mentioned it during other meetings I had, because this is important for us, it's important for Romanians who want to come to the United States. And you see more and more people come, President Trump, from Romania to the United States. Some come as tourists. Some come for business. And those who come for business should be encouraged."

FOR MARC KASOWITZ -- "James Comey is a 'leaker' - but that doesn't make him a criminal," by WaPo's Matt Zapotosky: "'He can fairly be criticized for whether that was the best way for him to address his discomfort with his conversation with the president,' said Barry J. Pollack, a white-collar criminal-defense attorney at Miller & Chevalier who has been involved in leak cases. 'But that's all a matter of how he conducts his job, and what his relationship is with the president is not a legal question.'

"Prosecutors who bring charges against people for sharing informationwith the public can do so only when classified or other national security material is at issue. Material cannot be classified to conceal legal violations or prevent embarrassment, according to an executive order from President Barack Obama. Telling a reporter nonclassified information of public interest is not only legal, but it's often the right thing to do." <http://wapo.st/2rcagTH>

-- **JOSH GERSTEIN:** "The FBI's standard employment agreement reads: 'I will not reveal, by any means, any information or material from or related to FBI files or any other information acquired by virtue of my official employment to any unauthorized recipient without prior official written authorization by the FBI.'" <http://politi.co/2rgDRip>

-- **A DEFIANT TRUMP** , via Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Glenn Thrush: "President Trump on Friday accused James B. Comey, the fired F.B.I. director, of lying under oath to Congress, saying he would gladly provide sworn testimony disputing Mr. Comey's charge that the president forced him out because of his handling of the investigation into the Trump campaign's possible collusion with Russia. ... Asked whether he would be willing to provide his version under oath, Mr. Trump responded, '100 percent.' He said of Mr. Mueller, 'I would be glad to tell him exactly what I just told you.'" <http://nyti.ms/2rXgFrP>

-- WHAT'S NEXT: "Comey associate has been in contact with Senate Judiciary about memos," by Kyle Cheney: "Dan Richman, a longtime friend and adviser to former FBI director James Comey, has been in contact with the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding a series of memos that Comey authored about his private conversations with President Donald Trump from January through April. A source familiar with the discussions says Richman connected with the Senate panel via the office of special counsel Robert Mueller ... The source says the matter will be addressed on Monday." <http://politi.co/2sovUMU>

-- BLOCKBUSTER RATINGS: "More than 19 million saw Comey testimony on TV," by Hadas Gold: "According to Nielsen ratings, ABC topped all networks, bringing in 3.295 million overall viewers, with CBS close behind with 3.286 million viewers. Fox News was next with 3.096 million viewers, followed by CNN with 3.049 million, NBC with 2.723 million viewers and MSNBC with 2.719 million viewers. ... Twitter, which partnered with Bloomberg to stream the hearing, said 2.7 million viewers tuned in." <http://politi.co/2s7XFce>

--PER FACEBOOK: There were 89 million views of videos related to Comey's testimony. Those videos had nearly 8 million comments, reactions and shares. There were also 26 million views of Comey-related live video on Facebook.

ABOUT THOSE TAPES -- @tripgabriel: "Personal anecdote: Candidate Trump once said he had taped a call with me, after disputing how he was quoted. I asked to hear it. Never did." ... **@mikielbarb** replies: "This happened to me as well. He always acted as if he was recording it."

******* A message from Samsung:** Samsung has announced more than \$10 Billion in US Growth since 2016, including our March 2017 acquisition of HARMAN International, a commitment of \$1.2 Billion in U.S.-based IoT Investment and R&D, and a \$1B expansion of our Austin, TX Semiconductor Manufacturing Facility. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *********

THROWING SHADE -- @lloydblankfein: "Just landed from China, trying to catch up.... How did 'infrastructure week' go?"

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- WHO MNUCHIN MET WITH IN CANADA - Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin made his first official solo foreign trip yesterday to Canada. Mnuchin, who met with Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau on the one-day trip to Ottawa, was seeking to highlight the importance of the U.S.-Canada strategic and economic alliance, according to Treasury. Deputy national security advisor Dina Powell and Treasury chief of staff Eli Miller accompanied Mnuchin. They also met Canadian foreign minister Chrystia Freeland, Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. David Mac Naughton and attended a cabinet meeting with top ministers. They discussed a variety of topics including the upcoming G-20 agenda, trade and economic issues and national security challenges. Mnuchin also met with a group of more than 20 CEOs who do

business in both the U.S. and Canada, including the heads of Ford Canada, GE Canada and TD Bank. More foreign trips by Mnuchin are in the works, according to our Treasury source.

DAVID A. FAHRENTHOLD in WaPo, "New York attorney general 'looking into' Eric Trump's foundation": "New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is 'looking into' a charitable foundation founded by Eric Trump, a spokesman for Schneiderman said, after Forbes magazine raised questions about whether President Trump's son had made misleading statements about how the foundation spent its money. ... One item at issue, the attorney general's office said, was that the Eric Trump Foundation has rebranded itself 'Curetivity' and held a fundraiser under that name. But, after a query from The Washington Post on Friday morning, the attorney general's office said the charity had not officially changed its name with New York charity regulators."
<http://wapo.st/2t5KuWr>

ROMNEYSTOCK - ALEX ISENSTADT'S HARDSHIP ASSIGNMENT to Deer Valley, Utah: "Romney reveals that Clinton nudged him to consider Trump's secretary of state overture": "Romney, appearing before a group of major Republican Party donors here, said that he reached out to Clinton last year after getting a phone call from then-Vice President-elect Mike Pence informing him that he was on the shortlist for secretary of state. ... Romney ... was golfing in Hawaii when he received the call ... He then turned to former secretaries of state, including the just-defeated Clinton, to ask whether he should consent to the offer. 'In each case, each of them said, "Please, please take that job if it's offered to you. We'd very much like to see you serve in that capacity,'" Romney said." <http://politi.co/2seggUP>

--"Biden encourages 2012 foe Romney to run for the Senate": "During a closed-door appearance with Romney here on Friday evening, Biden said Romney should consider a Senate bid. The remark came during the second day of the E2 Summit, an annual Romney-hosted donor conference. Attendees were gathered to hear a dialogue between the two men, who were on opposite sides of the 2012 election. Romney, according to two sources present, offered little by way of response other than to smile. ... There has been considerable speculation that Romney may seek the seat of longtime Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch should he forego reelection. Neither Romney ... nor his aides have denied interest in the seat should it become open." <http://politi.co/2s7YMBU>

MITCH MCCONNELL'S LATEST HEADACHE -- "Conservatives near revolt on Senate health care negotiations," by Burgess Everett: "As Obamacare repeal talks enter crunchtime with a vote as soon as this month, the Senate bill continues to tilt toward more moderate members of the GOP on keeping some of Obamacare's regulatory structure and providing a more generous wind-down of the law's Medicaid expansion. The movement has made Republicans increasingly pessimistic that two critical conservative senators, Mike Lee of Utah and Rand Paul of Kentucky, will be able to vote for the GOP's ultimate agreement on healthcare, according to senators and aides." <http://politi.co/2s7Z42l>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Trump Will Meet With Tech Leaders To Talk About Emerging Tech Like Drones," by BuzzFeed's Ryan Mac: "The White House is planning a second gathering of technology leaders later this month, in which President Donald Trump is expected to meet with venture capitalists and entrepreneurs from emerging tech firms. Three sources confirmed to BuzzFeed News that the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is organizing the event, scheduled for June 22 - three days after Trump is expected to meet with the likes of Apple CEO Tim Cook, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Oracle co-CEO Safra Catz and technology executives in Washington. ... [T]he second meeting ... will address emerging technologies trends including the Internet of Things, commercial drones and the funding of those companies." <http://bzfd.it/2rgABUf>

REMEMBERING ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI -- "Washington Remembers Brzezinski, and a Very Different Era," by NYT's Matt Flegenheimer: "One after another, the mourners filed into the stately Cathedral of St. Matthew -- ambassadors, cabinet secretaries, television hosts, a president -- hunkering together behind the grand doors, at least for a little while, to consider a man and a capital from a bygone political moment most seemed to prefer. The occasion was the funeral of Zbigniew Brzezinski ... 'He was a realistic optimist,' one eulogizer, the former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, said of Mr. Brzezinski, recalling his commitment to human rights, his belief in the power of considered diplomacy and his fierce wariness of Russia. The crowd nodded. ... [F]or two hours on Friday, the city's beleaguered establishment seemed to revel in a collective embrace, capping a week in which it rallied to defend some treasured Washington traditions -- congressional oversight, the independence of the F.B.I. -- in the face of persistent executive chaos." <http://nyti.ms/2s8bvLr>

-- Hundreds of people attended the funeral, at St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Washington. President Jimmy Carter, Madeline Albright, John Hamre, and Ian, Mark and Mika Brzezinski all gave remarks. Albright read a note from John Kerry and Hamre read a note from Henry Kissinger. **SPOTTED:** Jonathan Capehart, Chris Licht, Robin Wright, Andrew Schwartz, Al Hunt, Bob Gates, Ambassadors from Finland, China, Japan, Sweden, Italy, and UAE, Carl Bernstein, Kathy Kemper, Maureen Orth, Bob Schieffer, Margaret Carlson, Boyden Gray, Katty Kay, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Susan Rice, Chuck Todd, Ernest Moniz, and Margaret Warner.

TRUMP'S WEEKEND -- The president is at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey. **PENCE** is in Milwaukee, where he'll talk to small businesses with Gov. Scott Walker and give a speech about Obamacare. He'll return to D.C. and speak at the Faith & Freedom Coalition's Patriot's Gala.

THE JUICE ...

-- @rchammond: "The President has announced his intent to nominate Eric Ueland of Oregon to serve as Under Secretary of State for Management. @StateDept". Ueland is Republican staff director of the Senate Budget Committee, worked on the Trump transition and earlier in his career was chief of staff to former Senate Majority Leader Bill

Frist.

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: FROM HADAS GOLD: KELLYANNE CONWAY was overheard Thursday night talking about her West Wing co-workers to fellow revelers at a party. Conway was having an off-the-record conversation with a group of reporters and other attendees at the British Embassy at their election-night watch party. She said President Donald Trump told her to "go out there and say 'Jim Comey is going to have to wait and see about the tapes.'"

"I mean, that's basically the same thing as 'no comment,'" she said. Conway also mimicked Reince Priebus urging White House aides to stop leaking, and wondered aloud what Marc Short -- the legislative director -- does all day. She also said she is "the one catching the slings and arrows in the West Wing." The source who heard Conway created a Twitter account about the evening, naming it @kellyanneleaks and posting photos and tweets from the event. Two other sources confirmed Conway's remarks.

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said Conway disputed the account, explaining that she is very close to Short. Spicer said Conway was not mocking Priebus, but rather reporters for palace intrigue stories "and how wrong they've been." Spicer disputed that Conway had pushed back on the presidents request on how to comment about Comey, saying that she was simply explaining what the lawyers said the White House can say._

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump is pictured with Romanian President Klaus Werner Iohannis during their joint news conference in the Rose Garden of the White House on June 9. | Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP Photo

JOHN ASHCROFT'S FIRM HIRED BY QATAR - "Singled Out by Trump, Qatar Hires Former Top Law Man to Lobby," by Bloomberg's Bill Allison: "Qatar hired Ashcroft Law Firm, LLC for 90 days, agreeing to pay it \$2.5 million to help the Persian Gulf nation comply with U.S. money laundering and counterterrorism financing regulations and to stress its efforts to combat global terrorism, according to disclosures filed under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. ... The contract cites the 'urgent need to commence work immediately' which will be 'a top priority' for the firm. ...

"Ashcroft's firm promised to provide crisis response and management, program and system analysis, media outreach and advocacy, stressing Qatar's efforts to combat global terror, according to the contract. As part of that effort, the firm plans 'a comprehensive legal and government relations strategy,' one that will communicate broadly and to 'certain domestic agencies and leaders.'" <https://bloom.bg/2rcumWVs>

WHAT DAN SCAVINO IS READING -- "Inside The Chaotic Battle To Be The Top Reply To A Trump Tweet," by BuzzFeed's Charlie Warzel: "[S]econds after the president sounds off to his 31 million-plus followers, he's bombarded with replies -- almost all of them extreme. There are breathless condemnations of Trump policy; cries for his speedy impeachment; furious demands for his administration to admit its role in any number of global and political conspiracies; #Resist-ers; #TrumpTrain conductors and passengers; impassioned defenses of his character; praise for Trump as chessmaster-in-chief, 10 steps ahead and constantly outwitting enemies. There are comedians, actors, doctors, scientists, admirers, goons, politicians, activists, journalists, and trolls. ... And within seconds they're all just a few pixels below the president's missive - yelling, arguing, and looking to be the one Donald Trump sees when he checks his Twitter feed." <http://bzfd.it/2r57m7T>

-- **"Dan Scavino is the other @realdonaldtrump,"** by Eliana Johnson: "The White House is brimming with aides, lawyers, and communications gurus who are begging President Donald Trump to stop tweeting. The lone exception is Dan Scavino, the president's former golf caddy who now oversees the White House's messaging on social media. Scavino is in many ways the president's mini-me, a man whose bombast, impulse control, and instinct for a good punch match those of his boss.

"After Trump last weekend blasted London Mayor Sadiq Khan after a terror attack that killed eight people, Scavino posted a message citing Khan's own 2016 criticism of Trump's rhetoric on Muslims and terrorism-complete with a Trumpian, all-caps 'WAKE UP!!!!' And like his boss, Scavino has ignored warnings from high-level White House officials to tone down his tweets. Scavino was reprimanded on Friday for violating the Hatch Act, which prohibits senior executive branch officials from using their authority to interfere with elections, by calling in April for the ouster of Michigan Republican Justin Amash." <http://politi.co/2s7Uz7X>

TRUMP INC. -- "Trump Can Take Payments From Foreign Governments, U.S. Says," by Bloomberg's Bob Van Voris: "George Washington did it, so Donald Trump can too. That's the Justice Department's take on why the 45th president isn't violating the U.S. Constitution by accepting payments for goods and services from foreign governments without congressional approval. The foreign emoluments clause of the Constitution doesn't apply to fair-market commercial transactions, such as hotel bills, golf club fees, licensing payments and office rent, the Justice department argued Friday in a filing." <https://bloom.bg/2sNKISx>

--**@EricLiptonNYT:** "Among DOJ's arguments why Trump emoluments suit should be dismissed. 'Ten Facts about the Gristmill, George Washington's Mount Vernon'"

NEW POLITICO SERIES - "5 things Trump did while you weren't looking: Behind the scandal-of-the-day news, the White House really is changing American policy. A new series from The Agenda explains how," by Danny Vinik: "1. A boost for Uber and McDonald's. ... 2. A trade war with Mexico averted-for now. ... 3. The end of a DOJ 'slush fund.' ... 4. A win for nursing homes. ... 5. Get THAAD out of here."

<http://politi.co/2rWYsum>

2018 WATCH -- "Senate Democrats try to spark rural comeback in 2018," by Maggie Severns: "While many voters in rural areas complained that Democrats forgot them in 2016, and party strategists rush this year to find a new message to bring them back in the fold, Democratic senators up for reelection in 2018 have little time to spare to fix their party's issues. These battleground-state Democrats are quick to note that they got elected in the first place by tending to voters outside their states' biggest population centers. And they are focused this year on winning back voters their party has failed to connect with since the last time they appeared on the ballot."

<http://politi.co/2rWX22Z>

LUNCH WITH THE FT -- BERNIE SANDERS in DUBLIN! -- by Simon Kuper: "Sanders' car pulls up (brilliantly, his Irish driver is called Bernie Saunders) and the senator clambers out, his shoulders hunched, his suit crumpled, his strands of white hair unkempt, not the standard American politician with Botox and a hair transplant. Today he is tieless, too: he has been assured that Irish president Michael D Higgins won't mind. The tiny Higgins appears, dispensing handshakes and hugs.

"I think Trump is actually quite smart -- in his own way and for his own reasons. He may not know a lot about foreign policy or healthcare, but he is not a dumb man by any means. I think what Trump is doing is filling the agenda of people like the Koch brothers: essentially doing away with every major programme passed since Franklin D Roosevelt that would help working people, the elderly, children, the sick and the poor, and at the same time providing massive tax breaks to the rich and large corporations. In this budget, Trump did not propose cuts to social security [the American retirement programme], but I have zero doubt that will be coming down the pike."

<http://on.ft.com/2sobq70>

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years, and we announced more than \$10 Billion in US Growth since 2016. This year, we're proud to have added HARMAN International and its 3,500 U.S. employees to the Samsung workforce in America, and just as enthusiastic about our common vision, the similarities in our culture of innovation, and the added value we can create for customers. Learn more about our partnership at Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

KATY TUR PROFILE -- AND SHE'S A PHISH FAN! -- COVER OF NYT SUNDAY STYLES -- "Katy Tur Is Tougher Than She Looks: The NBC correspondent's swift and surprising rise at the network mirrored that of the presidential candidate she covered and occasionally battled with," by Luisita Lopez Torregrosa: "Mr. Trump's sudden rise mirrors that of Ms. Tur's. Just two years ago she was a foreign correspondent for NBC, living in London. But she happened to be in New York when the future president announced his candidacy, on June 16, 2015. 'How would you like to spend the summer in New York?' an NBC News executive asked her. 'We want you on Trump's campaign. It will be six weeks, tops. But hey, if he wins, you'll go to the White

House.'

"A year or so later, she had captured national attention. Colleagues rallied around her, thousands tweeted #iamwithtur, magazines came calling, and HarperCollins engaged her to write a book on the 2016 campaign; 'Unbelievable' is due out in September. Then there is the afternoon anchor slot, which MSNBC gave her in January. In April, she received a Walter Cronkite Award for excellence. And this month she will become a contributor to the much publicized new NBC News program 'Sunday Night With Megyn Kelly.'" <http://nyti.ms/2t5S6Z4>

MEDIAWATCH -- "10 months ago, Univision bought Gawker in a fire sale, and it's been messy ever since," by Business Insider's Maxwell Tani: "CEO Raju Narisetti ... is leading GMG through the media company's merger with Fusion Media Group, which is owned by the Spanish-language juggernaut Univision. According to the CEO, the transition has been a success. But conversations with over a dozen current and former employees painted a starkly different picture. Since the deal, the six former Gawker Media sites -- Gizmodo, Jezebel, Deadspin, Kotaku, Jalopnik, and Lifehacker -- have struggled with indecision, a dysfunctional bureaucracy, and an exodus of top leadership and institutional knowledge that gave Gawker Media its editorial bite." <http://read.bi/2rLXwKQ>

-- **DANIEL HALPER**, former D.C. bureau chief for the N.Y. Post who recently was hired by Matt Drudge, quietly joined the Washington Free Beacon as a contributing editor recently, Hadas Gold tells us. Halper and the Free Beacon did not respond to requests for more details.

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **14 keepers** <http://politi.co/2sbxstY>

DESSERT -- HOW MANY HAVE YOU SEEN? - "The 25 Best Films of the 21st Century So Far," by NYT's Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott: "1. There Will Be Blood ... 2. Spirited Away ... 3. Million Dollar Baby ... 4. A Touch of Sin ... 5. The Death of Mr. Lazarescu ... 6. Yi Yi ... 7. Inside Out ... 8. Boyhood ... 9. Summer Hours ... 10. The Hurt Locker." ***With in-depth discussions of each film on the list*** <http://nyti.ms/2t5lkG7>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"Why Men Don't Live as Long as Women,"** by Richard G. Bribiescas in Nautilus Magazine - per The Browser's description: "Are we at peak male testosterone? Testosterone raises the sex drive, builds muscle and burns fat. It also shortens the lifespan by encouraging recklessness, weakening the immune system, and raising the risk of prostate cancer. The reproductive payoff favoured high testosterone in ancient times: More children meant more surviving children. But now, thanks to monogamy and medicine, the trade-off is less clear. The evolutionary advantage may be passing to fathers who live longer." <http://bit.ly/2sKN0lp>

--**"America's Hidden H.I.V. Epidemic,"** by Linda Villarosa in the NYT Magazine: "Why do America's black gay and bisexual men have a higher H.I.V. rate than any country in the world?" <http://nyti.ms/2sLamrg> (h/t Longreads.com)

--**"The Real Story Behind Elon Musk's \$2.6 Billion Acquisition Of SolarCity And What It Means For Tesla's Future-Not To Mention The Planet's,"** by Fast Company's Austin Carr: "The Tesla CEO's merger with his cousins' sustainable-energy company, SolarCity, is totally logical-and hugely risky. With eyes now on the private sector for environmental leadership, can Musk pull off another miracle?" <http://bit.ly/2scvObB>

--**"Soccer for Intellectuals,"** by Bécquer Seguí in Public Books: "Any baseball or boxing narrative can be easily embodied in the momentary struggle between two individuals. Soccer, on the other hand, isn't wedded to the fate of individuals. Its beauty is most often in the battle between two ideas, two philosophies, two tactical approaches." <http://bit.ly/2t2yox5>

--**"Challenging Mainstream Thought About Beauty's Big Hand in Evolution,"** by NYT's James Gorman: "Are aesthetic judgments about mates invariably tied to traits we see as adaptive and worth passing on? Or, does beauty just 'happen'?" <http://nyti.ms/2s4QxNz> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"Bill Maher Knows Exactly What He's Doing: Just Ask Him,"** by Stephen Rodrick in Esquire: "Real Time's format is a throwback to a seventies talk show -- with a monologue, an interview, a panel discussion, some jokes, and a closing argument -- but here everything is done without the benefit of breath-catching commercial breaks. This setup sometimes leads to what can feel, in the moment, like a random car wreck, but Maher's been doing comedy for forty years. He's addicted to provocation, and more often than not, he's driving his show into a brick wall by design." <http://bit.ly/2s52a7h>

--**"Proust and Dreyfus,"** by Joachim Kalka in Tablet Magazine: "In an excerpt from the newly translated 'Gaslight,' by German writer Joachim Kalka, an examination of how the scandal that rocked France bled into European literature." <http://bit.ly/2rJ7bl6>

--**"Who Do You Want Elisabeth Moss to Be?"** by Emily Gould in Elle Magazine: <http://bit.ly/2rIYAyU>

--**"Welcome to the Green Machine,"** by John Nova Lomax in the June issue of Texas Monthly: "My son was jobless, directionless, and apartmentless. So when he decided to join the Army, we were just glad he was out of the house. What we didn't know was just how much the military would change him-and us." <http://bit.ly/2sL0TAb> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"The horrors of getting hit by a pitch,"** by Tim Kurkjian in ESPN on Aug 3, 2012: "When that baseball is flying directly at a hitter at 95 mph, and that batter can hear the ball spinning, like the sound of a giant bee attacking, and then it hits that batter and those red seams bore into the skin like the teeth of a buzz saw, well, the elegance and

romance of that pearl is replaced by piercing, pulsating, primal pain. It is pain that can last for weeks, it can leave a hideous mark that can last for months and it can instill a fear that can last forever." <http://es.pn/2t2Usl6>

--**"The Impossible Profession," by Janet Malcolm** in the November 24th, 1980 issue of The New Yorker: What it's like to be a psychoanalyst in NYC. <http://bit.ly/2smxM8L>

--**"Athens, Sparta and Rome: the Ancient election,"** by Mary Beard in The Times Literary Supplement: "Voters individually picked out their ballot slips (wax on wood, probably) from a basket as they walked across some form of bridge, then wrote the name of their candidate in the wax as they walked, and finally dropped it into the ballot box." <http://bit.ly/2sbKsQt>

--**"The White Wedding Dress Industrial Complex,"** by Helena Fitzgerald in Racked: "A fantasy of wealth beyond reality or responsibility is built into the details of these dresses, all the way down to the tiny rows of covered buttons. Mostly when we spend too much money, we pretend that the money isn't real. This is why part of the point of the dress is that you can't wear it again - it becomes a perfect object, distilled and frozen in time, lifted out of the ordinary cycles of use and value and repetition." <http://bit.ly/2r2ZS5k>

--**"How 'Eureka' Moments in Science Happen,"** by Cathy Newman in NatGeo: "From bathtubs to falling apples, find out what really drives some of the iconic tales of 'light bulb' moments in science." <http://bit.ly/2r3tYFR>

SUMMER BUCKET LIST -- WAPO: "The 40 most essential D.C. restaurant dishes of 2017" <http://wapo.st/2sNLwXz>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) last night watching the Cavs/Warriors game at the Trump Hotel.

OUT AND ABOUT - PATRICK STEEL and LEE SATTERFIELD's 50th birthday celebration last night at the Meridian International Center: Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Robert and Elena Allbritton, Dan and Rhoda Glickman, Nancy Bagley and Soroush Shehabi, Rob and Capricia Marshall, Ann Stock, Tony Blinken and Evan Ryan, Elizabeth Bagley, Jonathan Capehart and Nick Schmit, Kiki McLean, Melissa Moss, Adam and Tracy Bernstein, H.P. Goldfield and Kristin Mannion, Kim Cubine, Joel Johnson and Sara Latham, Debbie Fine, Erick Mullen and Kelly Craighead, Karen Finney, Stuart and Gwen Holliday, Kimball Stroud, Dan and Aviva Rosenthal, Linda Moore, Neal Wolin and Nicole Elkon

BIRTHDAYS: Jeff Zeleny, CNN's senior Washington correspondent and the pride of

Exeter, Nebraska, celebrating with a 29-hour birthday: breakfast in London and dinner in DC ... Sasha Obama is 16 ... Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal is 46 ... John Edwards is 64 ... Eliot Spitzer is 58 ... Jeff Greenfield is 74 ... F. Lee Bailey is 84 ... Sidewire's Meredith Carden, a Michelle Obama alum, the pride of Chicago and a birthday bride today! (h/ts Herbie Ziskend and boss Tucker Bounds) ... Joe Trippi, political consultant, Fox commentator, author, digital strategist, believer ... Stef Weiss (h/ts Jon Haber) ... John DiBiase ... Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-Kans.) is 54 ... NBC's Kate Snow ... Carlos Elizondo (h/t Marc Adelman) ... Joe Nolan ... Chad Rhoades, general counsel for Sen. Tillis ... Politico Europe's Simon Marks ... AAJ's Paula J. Burris, the pride of Arlington, Va., and the best office manager in the USA (h/t Randy White) ... Politico's Javier Ruiz ... Nicole Hager, Sen. Inhofe's press assistant (h/t Daisy Letendre) ... Jennifer Donnelly, a senior associate on the organizing and campaign management team at Precision Strategies (h/t Tom Zigo) ... Rob Morello, Romney and RNC alum, now co-founder of Fraym, is 3-0 (h/t wife Rachel Sorensen) ...

... **David O'Brien**, senior comms manager at CRAFT, is 31 ... Google's Cameron Foxgrover ... John Yoo ... Daryn Iwicki ... Obama DOJ alum Shirlethia Franklin ... Thomas Showalter ... Al Mottur, shareholder of Brownstein Hyatt, is 5-0 (h/t Stewart Verdery) ... Semonti Mustaphi Stephens, a Michelle Obama alum and the pride of Crystal, MN ... Charmion Kinder, director of comms at My Brother's Keeper Alliance ... WSJ's Corinne Ramey ... Suzy Vilmain ... Louisa Wachs ... Jim Wisley (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... John Pearson ... Courtney Pearson Drake ... Jan Ruckman ... Pete Slover (h/t Dick Keil) ... Chris Merriman ... Teryn Norris ... Prince Philip is 96 ... Elizabeth Hurley is 52 ... Kate Upton is 25 (h/ts AP)

THE SHOWS by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Former U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara ... Alan Dershowitz ... Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) ... Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.). Panel: Alex Castellanos, Matthew Dowd, Donna Brazile, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) and Sara Fagen

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) ... Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.). Panel: Julie Pace, David Ignatius, Susan Page and Ed O'Keefe

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) ... RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel. Panel: Karl Rove, former Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Md.), Newt Gingrich and Charles Lane

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine). Panel: Rep. Luis Guterrez (D-Ill.), former Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), Neera Tanden and David Urban. ***Dana Bash is anchoring***

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Preempted for French Open coverage

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: Jeff Greenfield, Clara Jeffrey and Matt Lewis ...

Adam Goldman ... Andy Borowitz ... Tim O'Brien

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Jackie Kucinich, Carl Hulse, Manu Raju and Sara Murray

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) ... House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) ... Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton ... Steve Hilton ... Bud Cummins. Panel: The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff and Rich Lowry

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Former Bush and Obama national security council staffer Gillian Turner ... Mollie Hemingway ... Juan Williams ... Ed Henry ... Amy Holmes ... Jessica Tarlov ... Carley Shimkus

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: R. James Woolsey ... Elizabeth Foley and Laurence Tribe ... Canadian foreign affairs minister Chrystia Freeland

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: Panel: Former Treasurer of the U.S. Rosario Marin and Adolfo Franco ... journalist and independent Mexican presidential hopeful Pedro Ferriz de Con ... "Compassion & Choices" national Latino communication manager Patricia Gonzalez-Portillo and mother of a child with a deadly form of brain cancer Nilsa Centro ... actress Salma Hayek

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: Part 1 of discussion with Recode editor at large and columnist and The Verge executive editor and columnist Walt Mossberg ...

"Newsmakers": NRCC chairman Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Ohio), questioned by The Hill's Scott Wong and Politico's Scott Bland ... **"Q&A"**: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum director Paul Sparrow

-- **Hearst / Sony's "Matter of Fact"** with Soledad O'Brien: Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) ... Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) ... report on the Trump administration's \$200 billion infrastructure proposal ... author and Auschwitz survivor Michael Bornstein ... discussion about ISIS internet recruitment efforts with RAND Center for Applied Network Analysis and System Science co-director and Rand Corporation engineer Elizabeth Bodine-Baron ... a tribute to journalists who give their lives covering conflicts around the world

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2r37J6h>): Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah).

***** **A message from Samsung**: Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years, and we announced more than \$10 Billion in US Growth since 2016. This year, we're proud to have added HARMAN International and its 3,500 U.S. employees to the Samsung workforce in America, and just as enthusiastic about our common vision, the similarities in our culture of innovation, and the added value we can create for customers. Learn more about our partnership at Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow. *****

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To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office[awilson@gop.com]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Tue 5/1/2018 4:20:06 PM
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Alana,

Just wanted to follow up with you here and see if any of those dates worked. Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 7:05 PM
To: 'Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office' <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Of course! We could do lunch May 7, 8, 10, 21, or 25. Let me know what might work!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office [<mailto:awilson@gop.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 4:09 PM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Unfortunately, the Chairwoman will be on the road for the next few weeks so right now I am looking at something week of May 7th or May 21st. Let me know if there are preferable dates and we can go from there.

Thanks!

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:56 AM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Got it. We could also do breakfast or coffee if that's easier – really just looking to get them together at some point in the next couple weeks. Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office [<mailto:awilson@gop.com>]

Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:47 AM

To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>

Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Thanks for reaching out. I know that right now neither of those options will work for the Chairwoman (we have quite a bit of travel coming up in the next few weeks), but let me speak with our team here and I'll send over a few options.

Thanks,

Alana

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:34 AM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Alana,

As Mike mentioned that the Chairwoman is out of town this week, wanted to offer Wednesday (25th) or Friday (27th) of next week instead.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Mike Reed - Communications/Research [<mailto:Mreed@gop.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:31 AM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Adding Alana to this email. She is the Chairwoman's scheduler. Ronna isn't in D.C. this week, but maybe you guys can find a time at a later date. Will let yall coordinate.

Thanks for reaching out!

Mike

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:20 AM
To: Mike Reed - Communications/Research <Mreed@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Mike,

I work with Jahan over at the EPA and understand he's spoken to you about getting Ronna McDaniel and Administrator Pruitt together for lunch. The Administrator could do lunch tomorrow, Wednesday or Friday of this week if Ronna is free any of those days. Let us know if that works or feel free to connect me with her scheduler. We were thinking the Capitol Hill Club would be convenient for her.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

ITEM 1 (WEEK AHEAD REPORTS):

8/17 – 8/20: Admin. Pruitt personal leave

8/21: Admin. Pruitt meetings in Mexico City

8/22: Admin. Pruitt State Action Tour: San Diego, CA

8/23: Admin. Pruitt State Action Tour: Boise, ID

8/24: Admin. Pruitt State Action Tour: Omaha, NE

Beyond: (8/28) Presidential Youth Environment Awards Ceremony in DC (8/29) State Action Tour: Kentucky (8/31 – 9/8) Australia

ITEM 2 (EPA ACCOMPLISHMENTS):

- ✓ 8/11 – 8/20: Admin. Pruitt personal leave
- ✓ **State Action Tour: (8/)** Continued national tour with a stop in TX to visit the Northern Texas Water District, Toyota HQ, and the Dallas Chapter of the Association of Homebuilders.
- ✓ **Interviews:** N/A
- ✓ **Enforcement:** (8/15) EPA added man who illegally disposed of radioactive waste to list of criminal fugitives: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/man-who-illegally-disposed-radioactive-waste-added-epas-list-criminal-fugitives>
- ✓ **More Enforcement:** (8/11) EPA ordered Fairbanks company to close illegal motor vehicle waste disposal well to protect nearby drinking water: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-orders-fairbanks-company-close-illegal-motor-vehicle-waste-disposal-well-protect>
- ✓ **Major Grant to New York State:** (8/16) EPA provided NYS with \$186M for wastewater and drinking water improvements: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-provides-new-york-186-million-wastewater-and-drinking-water-improvements>
- ✓ **Grant to New Jersey:** (8/15): EPA provides NJ w// \$1.2M for Superfund cleanups: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-provides-new-jersey-nearly-12-million-assess-contaminated-sites-and-oversee>

TOP CLIPS:

Daily Caller: Trump Administration makes first move in rolling back vehicle emission standards:

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/14/trump-administration-makes-first-move-in-rolling-back-vehicle-emission-standards/>

Associated Press: EPA moves to rewrite limits for coal power plant wastewater:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_EPA_PRUITT_COAL_ASH?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

Need to Know Network: Obama EPA Paid Unearned Overtime to Employees: <http://ntknetwork.com/report-obama-epa-paid-unearned-overtime-to-employees/>

Washington Examiner: Scott Pruitt on climate study ‘science should not be politicized’:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/scott-pruitt-on-climate-study-science-should-not-be-politicized/article/2631318>

WHO TV Des Moines: EPA Administrator Pruitt talks baseball: <http://whotv.com/2017/08/13/the-insiders-august-13th-edition-batter-up/>

To: Matt Mackowiak (gmail)[matt.mackowiak@gmail.com]
Cc: matt[matt@potomacstrategygroup.com]
From: Matt Mackowiak
Sent: Sat 6/10/2017 12:07:40 PM
Subject: 6/11/17 Sunday Talk Lineup

--NBC's **"Meet the Press"**: Preempted for French Open coverage.

--ABC's **"This Week"**: Former U.S. Attorney and NYU's Preet Bharara ... Harvard Law School's Alan Dershowitz ... author and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) ("Written Out of History") ... Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.V.). Panel: Republican strategist Alex Castellanos, ABC News political analyst Matthew Dowd, Democratic strategist Donna Brazile, DNC deputy chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) and Republican strategist Sara Fagen.

--CBS's **"Face the Nation"**: Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) ... Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.). Panel: AP's Julie Pace, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, USA Today's Susan Page and The Washington Post's Ed O'Keefe.

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) ... RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel. Panel: Former Bush White House advisor Karl Rove, former Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD), author and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA) ("Understanding Trump") and The Washington Post's Charles Lane.

--Fox News' **"Sunday Morning Futures"** (10am ET / 9am CT): Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) ... House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) ... Attorney General Ken Paxton (R-Tex.) ... Fox News host and former British PM David Cameron director of strategy Steve Hilton ... former U.S. Attorney Bud Cummins. Panel: The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff and National Review editor Rich Lowry.

--Fox News' **"MediaBuzz"** (11am ET / 10am CT): Former Bush and Obama national security council staffer Gillian Turner ... The Federalist's Mollie Hemingway ... Fox News co-host Juan Williams ... Fox News' Ed Henry ... Rasmussen Reports political analyst Amy Holmes ... Democratic strategist Jessica Tarlov ... Fox News Headlines 24/7 reporter Carley Shimkus.

--CNN's **"Inside Politics"** with John King (SUN 8am ET): Panel: The Daily Beast's Jackie Kucinich, The New York Times' Carl Hulse, CNN's Manu Raju and CNN's Sara Murray.

--**CNN's "State of the Union"** (9am ET / 12pm ET): Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME). Panel: Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.), former Rep. Mike Rogers (D-Mich.), Center for American Progress president Neera Tanden and former Trump campaign strategist David Urban. (Substitute anchor: CNN's Dana Bash).

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"** (SUN 10am, 1pm ET): Former CIA director and Gatestone Institute advisor R. James Woolsey ... author and Florida International University's Elizabeth Foley ("The Tea Party: Three Principles") and author and Harvard University's Laurence Tribe ("Uncertain Justice: The Roberts Court and the Constitution") ... Canadian foreign affairs minister Chrystia Freeland.

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: (SUN 11am ET): Panel: Political analyst Jeff Greenfield, Mother Jones editor-in-chief Clara Jeffrey and The Daily Beast senior columnist Matt Lewis ... The New York Times' Adam Goldman ... The New Yorker satirist Andy Borowitz.

--**Univision's "Al Punto"** (SUN 10am ET / 10am PT): Panel: Former Treasurer of the U.S. Rosario Marin and Republican analyst Adolfo Franco ... journalist and independent Mexican presidential hopeful Pedro Ferriz de Con ... "Compassion & Choices" national Latino communication manager Patricia Gonzalez-Portillo and mother of a child with a deadly form of brain cancer Nilsa Centro ... actress Salma Hayek.

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"** (SAT 6pm ET): Part 1 of discussion with Recode editor at large and columnist and The Verge executive editor and columnist Walt Mossberg ... **"Newsmakers"** (SUN 10am ET): NRCC chairman Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH), questioned by The Hill's Scott Wong and Politico's Scott Bland ... **"Q&A"** (SUN 8pm & 11pm ET): Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum director Paul Sparrow.

--**PBS's "To the Contrary"** with Bonnie Erbé: (airs all weekend): Special episode: The Controversy over H1B Visas.

--**Hearst / Sony's "Matter of Fact"** with Soledad O'Brien (airing Sunday in most markets, check local listings): Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) ... Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) ... report on the Trump administration's \$200 billion infrastructure proposal ... author and Auschwitz survivor Michael Bornstein ("The Survivor's Club") ... discussion about ISIS internet recruitment efforts with

RAND Center for Applied Network Analysis and System Science co-director and Rand Corporation engineer Elizabeth Bodine-Baron ... a tribute to journalists who give their lives covering conflicts around the world.

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at MackOnPolitics.com; Author and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) ("Written Out of History: The Forgotten Founders Who Fought Big Government").

Matt Mackowiak

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Wed 8/16/2017 9:19:49 PM
Subject: WH Weekly Report
2017-08-16 EPA Report for WH Comms Planning.docx

Team: Attached is the weekly report. Please take a look and send any edits or additions before 6pm.

Thanks!

John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

To: Matt Mackowiak (gmail)[matt.mackowiak@gmail.com]
Cc: matt[matt@potomacstrategygroup.com]
From: Matt Mackowiak
Sent: Sat 3/10/2018 5:42:59 AM
Subject: 3/11/18 Sunday Talk Lineup

--NBC's **"Meet the Press"**: Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) ... Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). Panel: Yahoo News' Matt Bai, NBC News' Andrea Mitchell, Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan and Washington Post columnist Eugene Robinson.

--ABC's **"This Week"**: Guests to be announced. Panel: ABC News' Mary Bruce, Democratic strategist Donna Brazile, former Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.) and Axios' Jonathan Swan.

--CBS's **"Face the Nation"**: CIA Director Mike Pompeo ... Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO). North Korea panel: Former Acting CIA Director Michael Morrell, Brookings Institution senior fellow Jung Pak and The New York Times' David Sanger ... political panel: TIME Magazine's Molly Ball, Washington Post columnist Michael Gerson, Politico's Susan Glasser and Bloomberg News' Shannon Pettypiece.

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) ... CIA Director Mike Pompeo. Panel: The Wall Street Journal's Jason Riley, AP's Catherine Lucey, The Washington Times' Charlie Hurt and Fox News political analyst Juan Williams (substitute anchor: Fox News' John Roberts).

--Fox News' **"Sunday Morning Futures"** (10am – 12pm ET): House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) ... U.S. Chamber of Commerce president & CEO Tom Donohue. Panel: The Wall Street Journal's Mary Kissel and James Freeman.

--Fox News' **"MediaBuzz"** (11am ET / 10am CT): Ex-wife of former White House staff secretary (Rob Porter) Jennie Willoughby ... Fox News' Gillian Turner ... The Federalist's Mollie Hemingway ... former Clinton campaign director of strategic communications Adrienne Elrod ... The Washington Examiner's Emily Jashinsky ... Bustle.com director of research Jessica Tarlov.

--CNN's **"Inside Politics"** with John King (SUN 8am ET): Panel: The New York Times' Julie Hirschfield Davis, The Washington Post's Karoun Demirjian, Politico's Eliana Johnson and

CNN's Nia-Malika Henderson.

--CNN's **"State of the Union"** (9am ET / 12pm ET): Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) ... Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). Panel: CNN political commentators Bakari Sellers and Amanda Carpenter, former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci and Center for American progress president Neera Tanden (substitute anchor: CNN's Jim Acosta).

--CNN's **"Fareed Zakaria GPS"** (SUN 10am, 1pm ET): Panel: Author and Eurasia Group president Ian Bremmer ("Superpower: Three Choices for America's Role in the World"), Brookings Institution senior fellow Stanley Roth and former CIA senior analyst and CSIS senior fellow Sue Mi Terry ... former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Duke University's Gen. Martin Dempsey (U.S. Army, Ret.).

--CNN's **"Reliable Sources"**: (SUN 11am ET): Panel: American Urban Radio Networks' April Ryan, New York Post and Washington Examiner columnist Salena Zito and The Daily Beast editor in chief John Avlon ... USA Today editor in chief Nicole Carroll and The Baltimore Sun's David Zurawik ... The Wall Street Journal's Michael Rothfeld ... The New York Times gender editor Jessica Bennett.

--Univision's **"Al Punto"** (SUN 10am ET / 10am PT): Undocumented immigrant Carmela Apolonio Hernandez ... Mexican political analyst and journalist Denise Dresser ... Colombian presidential candidate Gustavo Petro ... Univision News correspondent Pedro Rojas ... teachers Wendy Vazquez and Liliana Ruido and competitive shooter and instructor Gabby Franco ... actress Daniela Vega.

--C-SPAN: **"The Communicators"** (SAT 6pm ET): Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), questioned by The Washington Post's Tony Romm ... **"Newsmakers"** (SUN 10am ET): Guest to be announced ... **"Q&A"** (SUN 8pm & 11pm ET): Author and former U.S. Border Patrol agent Francisco Cantú ("The Line Becomes a River").

--MSNBC's **"Kasie DC"** (SUN 7pm ET): Former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci ... figure skater Adam Rippon ... former Gov. Ed Rendell (D-PA) ... Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA) ... Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA) ... historian Jon Meacham ... former RNC chairman Michael Steele ... former Assistant Secretary of Defense and WMD Commission

executive director Evelyn Farkas ... Cook Political Report's Dave Wasserman ... The Washington Post's Ashley Parker ... The Boston Herald's Kimberly Atkins.

--**"The McLaughlin Group"**: Moderator Tom Rogan with syndicated columnist Pat Buchanan, The Daily Beast's Eleanor Clift, syndicated columnist Clarence Page and guest panelist former NSA analyst and New York Observer columnist John Schindler.

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at MackOnPolitics.com: U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL).

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Mon 4/30/2018 12:07:49 PM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle, presented by the Association of American Railroads: GOP FEARS WORST IN OHIO PRIMARY -- Trump sees no Democratic wave -- DEMS EXPAND HOUSE MAP -- Bush lawyer expected to mount Democratic campaign

04/30/2018 08:05 AM EDT

By Nolan D. McCaskill (nmccaskill@politico.com or [@NolanDMcCaskill](https://twitter.com/NolanDMcCaskill))

DIVISIVE PRIMARY COULD COST GOP A SPECIAL ELECTION -- Republicans fear a chaotic primary could cost the GOP a seat in an Ohio special election. House Freedom Caucus co-founder Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) is backing the self-described Trump Republican Melanie Leneghan, pitting him against former Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-Ohio), who has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to boost state Sen. Troy Balderson in the race to succeed him. Tiberi, a close ally of GOP leadership, resigned in January. "It's the latest in a series of mainstream-versus-outsider battles in Republican primaries around the country," Elena Schneider reports.

"But some of Balderson's backers say there is more than intraparty politics at stake: They argue that a Leneghan primary win would put the GOP in danger of losing another special election this summer, in a district that's been held for decades by Republicans like Tiberi and Ohio Gov. John Kasich," she continues. Democrats won special elections for a conservative Alabama Senate and Pennsylvania House seat. Republicans, however, were successful in staving off a Democratic challenge for an Arizona seat, though the single-digit margin of victory could signal problems for November. Much more: <https://politi.co/2r5e66O>

TRUMP BULLISH ON GOP MIDTERM PROSPECTS -- President Donald Trump doesn't agree with the notion that Democrats could win back the House or take the Senate in November, "leaving party officials and the president's advisers nervous that he does not grasp the gravity of the threat they face in the midterm elections," The New York Times' Jonathan Martin, Alexander Burns and Maggie Haberman report. "Congressional and party leaders and even some Trump aides are concerned that the president's boundless self-assurance about politics will cause him to ignore or undermine their midterm strategy."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) reminded the president over dinner earlier this month that the party's prospects are tied to what he says and does. Marc Short, the White House legislative affairs director, said the GOP's House majority was all but doomed. Trump, however, rejected that assertion. Advisers say Trump plans to hold one fundraiser a week and rally regularly with candidates beginning this summer. "But there is not yet any coordinated effort about where to deploy Mr. Trump, and there are divisions within his ever-fractional circle of advisers about how to approach the elections," they write. More: <https://nyti.ms/2K1zKfM>

Related: "'Ready, shoot, aim': President Trump's loyalty tests cause hiring headaches," by The Washington Post's Ashley Parker, Philip Rucker and Josh Dawsey: <https://wapo.st/2HZMIBz>;

BUT DEMS ARE EXPANDING THEIR TARGETS -- Democrats believed last year that

focusing on the suburbs would lead them back into the majority in the House. But now Democrats are "suggesting that the 2018 field is dramatically larger than anyone could have guessed last year, including in some more rural spots that they once thought of ceding to Republicans," The Washington Post's Paul Kane reports. "For Democrats, the first-tier districts remain roughly three dozen largely suburban and well-educated areas, but they're now eyeing second- and third-tier races in case the wave is as big as some Democrats hope."

Republicans were and are able to spend big in special elections. But the GOP can't prop up candidates in the same fashion come November, when 50 to 100 Republican seats will be challenged while only a few Democratic seats are expected to be in play. "There is a wave out there that I do see coming, and I think to deny that is an unwise position to take," Rep. Tom Reed (R-N.Y.) warned. More: <https://wapo.st/2jflzY>

GOOD MORNING! Thanks for reading Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill, on this Monday, April 30.

POLITICO Space is our new weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age. [Sign up today.](#)

FRIDAY'S MOST CLICKED: HuffPost's [report](#) on the White House questionnaire for Republican candidates who want the president's backing was the winner.

HARRIS GROWS DIGITAL ARMY -- When Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) became the latest 2020 prospect to swear off money from corporate PACs, it "reflected a broader -- potentially more significant -- effort to fortify her small-donor fundraising strategy ahead of the 2020 election," David Siders reports. "She's spending aggressively to bolster her digital campaign infrastructure and cultivate supporters online, creating a template that resembles the one that served [Bernie] Sanders so well against Hillary Clinton."

In the first quarter of 2018, she spent more than \$600,000 on web advertising and digital campaign consulting, far outspending Sanders and Sens. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) in that area. She's also investing in online ads and email list development. "The heavy spending represented more than two-thirds of Harris' total haul for the quarter," Siders writes. "Harris holds just more than \$1.5 million on hand, but her early investment in digital could help her catch up to Democrats with more established followings online." More: <https://politi.co/2JHb0xD>

**** A message from the Association of American Railroads:** The Association of American Railroads wanted to park a modern locomotive in the Rayburn Foyer. Turns out there are rules against that. So we're bringing you the next best thing. Find out what on May 15. <https://bit.ly/2HwNtmo> **

TRUMP CONTINUES ATTACKS ON TESTER -- The president escalated his attacks on Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) over the weekend, calling on the man who played a key role in sinking Ronny Jackson's nomination to be VA secretary to resign. At a rally on Saturday, Trump claimed to "know things about Tester that I could say, too," adding that "if I said them, he'd

never be elected again." It's unclear what he was alluding to. "The president has for days been sharply criticizing Mr. Tester ... while ignoring Republican resistance to Dr. Jackson's nomination," The New York Times' Peter Baker reports. "But Mr. Tester is from a conservative state that in 2016 supported Mr. Trump strongly, giving him 55.6 percent of its votes."

"Despite Montana's conservative tilt, Mr. Tester has appeared to be in good shape to win re-election, and he has expressed no regret and no public concern about the president's threats," Baker adds. Tester, a former DSCC chairman, had nearly \$7 million in his campaign account at the end of the first quarter. Trump tapped Tester's expected general election opponent, Ryan Zinke, to be Interior secretary, leaving "a relatively undistinguished group of Republican challengers," he notes. "Among them, Matt Rosendale, the state auditor, seems most likely to emerge as the nominee." More: <https://nyti.ms/2r8Adt6>

Related reads: "Ronny Jackson won't return to old job as Trump's physician," by Eliana Johnson: <https://politi.co/2jiIcAk>; and "Gowdy: Some allegations against Ronny Jackson 'warrant' investigation," from David Beavers: <https://politi.co/2HGmT6j>

BOTH PARTIES UPSET BY CHAPLAIN'S OUSTER -- Democrats forced a floor vote Friday on a resolution to establish a select committee to investigate Father Patrick Conroy's ouster, a move that came as Catholics on both sides of the aisle expressed dissatisfaction with the House chaplain's forced resignation. Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) told his conference during a private meeting that it wasn't politically motivated and came after multiple members complained that Conroy wasn't meeting their "pastoral needs." "But even that meeting devolved into drama as Catholic Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) scolded Rep. Mark Walker (R-N.C.), a Baptist pastor, for comments Walker made about the next chaplain needing to have more of a family background," Heather and Rachel report.

"Little detail has emerged about exactly why Ryan fired Conroy, the first time in history the House chaplain has been forced to step down," they add. "That's left members to speculate about the possible reasons for his ouster, from a sermon he delivered in November, mentioning the GOP tax bill, to Conroy's supposed lack of outreach after the congressional baseball practice shooting last summer." King told reporters that Conroy's historic ouster "raises serious questions" and said members "deserve more of an explanation of why" he was let go. More: <https://politi.co/2HDwdYB>

WALKER TOUTS HISTORIC FUNDRAISER -- Rep. Mark Walker (R-N.C.) says a fundraising luncheon he held with Vice President Mike Pence in Greensboro earlier this month that brought in more than \$650,000 was the single largest fundraising haul for a U.S. House race in state history. "RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel, Sen. Richard Burr, Tillis, U.S. Rep. Ted Budd, former Gov. Pat McCrory and Lt. Gov. Dan Forest attended Walker's event," The News & Observer's Paul A. Specht reports. "Ticket prices ranged from \$25,000 to co-chair the event and \$15,000 to host it, to \$1,000 for guests." More: <http://bit.ly/2Fww5Ze>

Related: "Elaine Chao the enforcer," via Axios' Jonathan Swan: <http://bit.ly/2vUtOHq>

HOW BREDESEN IS RUNNING IN RED TENNESSEE -- Former Gov. Phil Bredesen is a

Democrat running to replace Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), but he's far from advertising it. In fact, some voters in Tennessee aren't sure exactly what he thinks about Trump. "Bredesen is the kind of politician that many have thought were on their way to extinction: A moderate Democrat in a red state whose political career has largely been defined by the Republican and independent support he has fostered for decades," CNN's Dan Merica reports. Tennessee hasn't elected a Democratic senator in 20 years, but Bredesen is betting that running his campaign as a "solutions-oriented politician who is willing to work with anyone" will pay off. More: <https://cnn.it/2HDu9Uz>

FORMER BUSH LAWYER LAUNCHING DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN -- Former George W. Bush ethics lawyer Richard Painter is expected to announce his run for Senate in Minnesota at a news conference today -- as a Democrat. Painter will challenge Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.), who was appointed to former Sen. Al Franken's (D-Minn.) seat after he resigned in January following sexual harassment allegations. "Minnesota's other Senate seat, held by Democrat Amy Klobuchar, is also up this fall, although she is widely expected to win another term," the Star Tribune's Paul Walsh reports. Painter, who is seeking elected office for the first time, teaches corporate law at the University of Minnesota. He has lived in the state since 2007. More: <http://strib.mn/2FsM22w>

MEEHAN LEAVES CONGRESS, VOWS TO PAY BACK \$39K SETTLEMENT -- Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-Pa.) resigned from Congress on Friday but pledged to repay taxpayers within 30 days the \$39,000 he used to settle a sexual harassment claim. The House Ethics Committee was investigating allegations against Meehan, who had announced in January that he wouldn't seek reelection. While denying any wrongdoing, Meehan suggested his resignation was submitted to spare his staff from "the rigors of an" ethics probe. "A special election for Meehan's unexpired term will be held under the old lines -- a battleground district split between Democrats and Republicans," Steven Shepard and I write. "The redrawn seat on the general election ballot is more Democratic-leaning, and the GOP is likely to lose the district in the new Congress next year." More: <https://politi.co/2I3RTAD>

TRANSITIONS -- Michael Brady starts as a press assistant for Sen Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.). He was previously a research fellow at National Journal.

Jennifer Talhelm starts today as the communications and marketing director for Western Resource Advocates and will be located in its Santa Fe office. She most recently was comms director for Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

TODAY IN CONGRESS -- The House and Senate are out.

FRIDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER -- Ben Howard was first to correctly guess that that William Howard Taft started the tradition of presidents throwing out the first pitch at baseball games in 1910.

TODAY'S TRIVIA -- From Ben: John Quincy Adams returned to the House after leaving the presidency. Who was the only president to return as a U.S. senator? The first person to correctly guess gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send your best guess my way:

nmccaskill@politico.com.

GET HUDDLE emailed to your phone each morning.

**** A message from the Association of American Railroads:** We thought it'd be a Capitol idea (wink) to exhibit powerful technology in the halls of power. But locomotives are 200-ton supercomputers packing enough horsepower to carry the weight of the U.S. economy. We can't just park one in the lobby.

How else can we communicate the sheer size of a freight train? The scale of our 140,000-mile network? The technology we use to ensure we remain one of the safest and most efficient forms of transportation in the world?

Turns out the answer was in front of our eyes. And we'll put it in front of yours. One day only, at the Rayburn Foyer, May 15. <https://bit.ly/2HwNtmo> **

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/04/30/gop-fears-worst-in-ohio-primary-trump-sees-no-democratic-wave-dems-expand-house-map-bush-lawyer-expected-to-mount-democratic-campaign-266867>

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Daily Communications Report: EPA

TO: White House Cabinet Affairs Communications
FR: EPA Office of Public Affairs
DT: **Tuesday, August 15, 2017**

Upcoming Wednesday, August 16, 2017: EPA will award NYS two grants: \$146.3 M for clean water and \$39.6 M for drinking water state revolving fund.

Thursday, August 17, 2017: EPA will award NJ two grants \$54.2 M for clean water and \$15.68 for drinking water state revolving fund.

Inquiries

HQ

- Consumer Affairs (Amy Martyn) Questions on dicamba.
- E&E News (Arianna Skibell) Endangerment finding.
- Food Navigator USA (Elaine Watson) Excessive residue levels in imported produce.
- Law360 (Adam Lidgett) Seeking comment on various environmental groups recently filing lawsuits against EPA.
- Politico (Emily Holden) Requesting copy of the Administrator's state tour itinerary.
- Reuters (Emily Flitter) Reaction to 10th circuit court ruling re: RFS.
- Washington Post (Sonia Rao) Inquiry concerning bedbugs in hotel rooms versus one's home.

Regional

- KQED (NPR, San Francisco; Scott Sherman) Earthjustice litigation on toxic chemical framework rules.
- Montana Standard (Susan Dunlap) Seeking comment on Butte, Montana superfund cleanup.
- Vermont Digger (Mike Polhamus) Requesting to speak with someone from EPA about a lawsuit filed by the Vermont Public Interest Research Group regarding the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act.
- WESA-NPR Pittsburgh Allegheny Front (Reid Frazier) Pittsburgh's lead line replacement program.
- Sacramento Bee (Ryan Sabalow) Reporter working on story regarding settlement with Central Valley farmer over a wetlands case.

Top Stories

E&E News: Pruitt slams 'false narrative' on climate report:

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/15/stories/1060058771>

Daily Caller: Obama Is Gone, But Not His Administration's Crusade To Crush A Farmer:

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/14/obama-is-gone-but-not-his-administrations-crusade-to-crush-a-farmer/>

NTK Network: Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless:

<http://ntknetwork.com/here-is-why-keith-ellisons-community-forum-to-save-the-epa-is-pointless/>

Top Issues and Accomplishments

Region 2 Press Release: EPA Provides New Jersey with Nearly \$ 1.2 Million to Assess Contaminated Sites and Oversee Superfund Cleanups: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-provides-new-jersey-nearly-12-million-assess-contaminated-sites-and-oversee>

Region 6 Press Release: EPA and Tribal Officials Tour Tar Creek Superfund Site: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-and-tribal-officials-tour-tar-creek-superfund-site>

Region 6 Press Release: EPA Grant of \$1.5M Will Help Louisiana Fight Pollution: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-grant-15m-will-help-louisiana-fight-pollution>

Region 8 Press Release: Man who illegally disposed of radioactive waste added to EPA's list of Criminal Fugitives: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/man-who-illegally-disposed-radioactive-waste-added-epas-list-criminal-fugitives>

To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Fri 3/9/2018 8:49:09 PM
Subject: New Clips - 9 March 2018

(Full stories, highlights, and details are listed further down in the email, and can be jumped to by clicking on any of the links below.)

[The Hill - Scott Pruitt is leading the EPA toward greatness \(*Opinion\)](#)

[Politico - Lawmakers struggle to get Pruitt in front of them](#)

[E&E Greenwire - GOP media firm hired for Pruitt's 'year in review' report](#)

[NJ.com - Trump's latest EPA pick works for company linked to NJ Superfund site](#)

[Daily Caller - REVEALED: EPA Animal Testing Studies Forced Rats To Inhale Diesel Exhaust, Smog](#)

[E&E News PM - EPA taking comment on plan to scrap oil and gas standards](#)

[BNA - Sensors, Health Megastudy Offer Chance to Reset Air, Toxic Limits](#)

[BNA - House Votes to Ease Toxic Air Pollutant Rule for Coal Waste Plants](#)

[BNA - Senators Seek Time to Strike Deal on Farm Emissions Bill](#)

E&E Daily - Dems, GOP search for compromise on farm air pollution bill

Washington Examiner - Democrats call ethanol mandate an environmental 'flop'

E&E Greenwire - Court stays SO2 requirements for Ark. plants

E&E Greenwire - Scientist survey flagged as spam

E&E Climatewire - West Wing disorder leaves energy officials feeling jittery

BNA - Florida Wetlands, Dredging Permits Could Shift to State Control

+++

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/377452-scott-pruitt-is-leading-the-epa-toward-greatness>

Scott Pruitt is leading the EPA toward greatness (*Opinion)

By Former Rep. Tim Huelskamp and H. Sterling Burnett, 3/9/18, 6:00 AM

In the first season of Donald's Trump "Presidential Apprentice," there's no question who the star hire of his administration has been: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

As a candidate for president, Trump argued the massive regulatory state headquartered in Washington was destroying jobs, restricting economic growth, and preventing America from becoming great again. Trump particularly directed his condemnation at EPA, which had grossly overstepped its legal authority by imposing regulations that did little to protect human health or the environment, but were costing the United States jobs, undermining our international economic competitiveness, and raising energy prices.

Few people understood the extent to which EPA had exceeded their legal authority and expanded its control over peoples' lives better than Pruitt. As Oklahoma's attorney general, Pruitt fervently and effectively fought to protect Oklahomans against federal overreach and to defend sound energy and environmental policy. Pruitt successfully sued the EPA numerous times, including convincing the courts to place stays on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule and the Clean Power Plan (CPP).

Now that Pruitt has served a full year as EPA administrator, it is a good time to assess his accomplishments. Pruitt has redirected EPA's efforts away from "ideological crusades," making huge strides in returning the agency's focus to the core functions assigned to it by Congress: working cooperatively with states to ensure the nation's air, waters, and lands are cleaner.

Trump and Pruitt share an understanding that climate change is not a significant threat to the prosperity and health of Americans. As such, when Trump directed EPA to review the 2016 Clean Power Plan — which forced states and companies to undertake a wholesale overhaul of their electric power supply, largely removing affordable, reliable coal-powered power plants from the mix—Pruitt reported back the plan violated the 1970 Clean Air Act and states' rightful control of their electric power systems. Pruitt then rescinded the CPP.

To improve transparency and accountability, Pruitt ended the agency's use of sue-and-settle agreements, which radical environmentalists and collaborators within the EPA secretly used for years to dictate energy and environmental policy outside of the transparency of the public regulatory process. Pruitt also cleared Obama holdovers from the EPA Science Advisory Committees and issued a directive ensuring members of its Federal Advisory Committees are not

receiving EPA grants and have no other conflicts of interest.

Helping Trump keep his commitment to rescind two regulations for every new regulation, under Pruitt's leadership the EPA finalized 22 deregulatory actions, saving American families and businesses more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs.

After Trump issued an executive order directing the EPA to review and rescind the overreaching WOTUS rule, which had been issued in 2015, Pruitt's EPA quickly responded by postponing the rule's date of implementation to 2020. This offers property owners and states regulatory certainty while the agency revises WOTUS to safeguard property rights and to ensure the regulation is actually consistent with the law and Supreme Court rulings.

With little media attention, the EPA under Pruitt has stepped up its efforts to clean the nation's most toxic Superfund sites, putting the properties back into productive use. In 2016, Obama's EPA remediated and removed only two sites from Superfund's national priorities list (NPL). By comparison, in Pruitt's first year, EPA cleaned up and removed seven sites from the NPL. It's amazing what the agency can do when it focuses its efforts on core functions.

Under Obama, the EPA rejected or refused to accept dozens of state implementation plans (SIPs) to clean up air, water, and land, imposing instead 50 federal implementation plans on states. Pruitt reversed EPA's course, embracing cooperation with the states. Since March 1, 2017, EPA acted on 322 SIPs and substituted one SIP each month for a federal implementation plan.

In a sign of improving efficiency, Pruitt's EPA has cut the number of days needed to review state water quality standards in half, from 120 days to 60 days, and cleared a backlog of more than 600 chemicals under review by the agency, ensuring all new chemicals proposed for public or commercial have received a safety analysis and determination within approximately 90 days.

If the stock market, job growth, decline in unemployment, enhanced business investment, and consumer confidence increases are any indication, Trump is well on his way to making America great again, and the changes made at EPA under Scott Pruitt's direction have played no small part in that.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/article/2018/03/lawmakers-struggle-to-get-pruitt-in-front-of-them-398789>

Lawmakers struggle to get Pruitt in front of them

By Anthony Adragna and Lauren Gardner, 3/9/18

Congressional Republicans are publicly acknowledging what many Democrats have been grumbling about for months — it's really hard to get EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt into a witness seat.

House and Senate transportation committees have asked Pruitt to testify about the administration's infrastructure plan, but both were rebuffed, according to sources familiar with the moves. And Pruitt is the only one of President Donald Trump's key three energy officials not currently scheduled to discuss his agency's fiscal 2019 budget request next week. Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke have already announced trips to Capitol Hill.

Other members of Trump's Cabinet have proven more willing to answer lawmakers' questions on the administration's goals and priorities. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has appeared at two hearings in the last eight days to discuss the administration's infrastructure plan with lawmakers. She'll return Wednesday to testify before the Senate Commerce Committee on the proposal, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross will join her.

Even as they voiced confidence Pruitt would ultimately make the trip, senior Republicans acknowledged it's been hard to get him in front of their panels.

“I would just say it takes a little more cajoling [with him],” Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.), who chairs the Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee, told POLITICO. “It’s part of the job. He should expect it.”

Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-Ore.) told POLITICO he’d made clear to EPA that senior officials are expected to testify as he suggested it had been hard to find a time that worked for Pruitt.

“Some people have busier schedules than others, so we look forward to him coming before the committee in the near future to talk about the budget,” he said. “All of them are expected to be there. He knows that. We’ve had conversations and we’ll get a date that works.”

Pruitt never visited Walden's panel for a budget hearing last year, although he did testify in front of the House Appropriations Committee on his agency's request. The lack of a Pruitt appearance on the calendar so far in 2018 led two senior E&C Democrats — ranking member Frank Pallone of New Jersey and Environment Subcommittee ranking member Paul Tonko of New York — to demand Thursday their counterparts ask for or, if he refuses, compel Pruitt’s appearance at a budget session “as soon as possible.” Pruitt returned to Capitol Hill just two other times since taking office, once for an oversight hearing at E&C and most recently in January at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

EPA did not respond to a request for comment Friday. In response to the Democrats' letter a day earlier, an agency spokesman said Pruitt would work with the committee.

Pruitt’s reluctance to testify is not limited to one committee, though. He declined an invitation from the House Transportation Committee to share his views on the administration’s infrastructure plan for a hearing this week, according to a source close to Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.). His refusal to appear comes despite the central role he would play on aspects of the infrastructure plan such as streamlined permitting.

The administrator also declined to appear at a March 1 hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on infrastructure, as ranking member Tom Carper (D-Del.) referenced during his opening statement: “I was disappointed to learn that Administrator Pruitt declined to testify despite EPA’s important role in the development of drinking water and

wastewater infrastructure.”

Spokesmen for T&I and EPW committee Republicans did not respond to requests for comment.

And Pruitt’s sudden bashfulness on infrastructure comes despite his central role in unveiling the administration’s plan. He sat two spots over from Trump at a roundtable coinciding with the proposal’s release last month. He stood alongside the president in June 2017 during a speech on infrastructure near Cincinnati. And he’s spoken forcefully of his desire to wage a “war on lead” that would see drinking water pipes replaced.

Some Republican allies said they understood why Pruitt would be reluctant to head to Hill to face a barrage of intense questioning, even as they conceded he’d ultimately have to testify on his budget request.

“I’m going to try to resist having it just [be] a bashing center for two and a half hours,” Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) said. “He handles himself very well, but no one should have to go through that.”

Inhofe said the only people to suggest Pruitt was dodging appearances before Congress were “people who don’t like him or the far-left environmentalists — the extremists.”

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060075945/search?keyword=EPA>

GOP media firm hired for Pruitt's 'year in review' report

By Kevin Bogardus and Mike Soraghan, 3/9/18

U.S. EPA hired Republican campaign consultants to help produce a report touting Administrator Scott Pruitt's accomplishments.

Go BIG Media Inc. signed a contract with the federal agency last month worth up to \$6,500, according to federal records. Under the contract, the firm was to help with "design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report."

It was Go BIG Media's first federal government contract.

On Monday, EPA released the "Year In Review" report, which highlighted Pruitt's actions in "2017-2018." It emphasized the EPA chief's moves to roll back several major regulations, which have won praise from industry but frustrated environmental groups (E&E News PM, March 5).

The report has several statistics on Pruitt's work, including 22 deregulatory actions that the agency argues will lead to more than \$1 billion in cost savings. It also includes several pages of "Media Highlights" — excerpts of news interviews and articles, including the EPA chief's No. 5 spot on GQ's "50 Most Powerful People in Trump's Washington." And it includes quotes from newsmakers praising Pruitt and the agency under "WHAT THEY'RE SAYING."

In its 37 pages, the report mentions Pruitt more than 200 times.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said that Go BIG Media was the cheaper vendor to help with the EPA report but that in the end, the document was completed within the agency.

"We had two options: One vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house," Wilcox said.

The EPA spokesman compared the agency's use of a contractor for Pruitt's report to the "What's Upstream" effort, a billboard advertising campaign funded with EPA grant money under the Obama administration that targeted farmers and sparked a Republican backlash.

In a report released last April, the EPA inspector general cleared the agency of violating any lobbying prohibitions with the campaign run by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and its public relations firm, Strategies 360. One of the firm's co-founders, Ron Dotzauer, has run Democratic political campaigns.

"This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager's PR firm to run EPA's What's Upstream campaign," Wilcox said.

Pruitt, formerly Oklahoma's attorney general before coming to EPA, is thought to have political ambitions outside the agency. Observers expect the EPA chief will run again for a statewide office back home once he leaves the federal government.

Go BIG Media was founded in 2015 by veteran GOP operative Phillip Stutts, who has worked on presidential and congressional campaigns.

He served as a political appointee at the Department of Education during the George W. Bush administration. Stutts also has ties to the Trump administration, helping with the contentious nomination of Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

His website says he's worked on campaigns with "billions of dollars in political ad spend" and contributed to "over 1,000 election victories, including hundreds of US House campaigns, dozens of US Senate campaigns and even three Presidential victories."

The site also says he is "one of the masterminds behind the curtain of political marketing," having been lauded as a "marketing genius" by Fox Business and "the political guru" by ESPN. Stutts also sings the virtues of using campaign-style tactics — including "going negative" — in other fields, such as business and nonprofit groups.

He is a frequent guest commentator on cable news shows and is currently promoting a new book — "Fire Them Now" — warning of "lies" told by digital marketers.

Go BIG Media profiles its campaign work on its website, including advertisements on behalf of GOP political groups like the Senate Leadership Fund and the National Republican Senatorial Committee attacking Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) and bolstering GOP candidates like former Sen. Luther Strange in Alabama and Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush.

Federal Election Commission records show that in the 2018 election cycle, the firm has been paid for services such as "online advertising" and "media consulting" by more than a dozen Republican campaigns.

Contracting records show that funds for EPA's contract with Go BIG Media haven't been obligated. But Elliot Fuchs, financial controller for Go BIG Media, told E&E News that his firm was paid \$6,500 by EPA for its work, identified as the agreement's "ceiling" in the records. He said Peter Graves was the firm's lead employee on the EPA project and would know more about what the job entailed.

Graves joined the firm last year as its president of political and media strategies. He worked at the Republican National Committee during the last two election cycles and has also been political director and executive director of the Washington State Republican Party.

His Twitter account quips that he is "occasionally a propagandist."

Neither Stutts nor Graves returned messages from E&E News asking for comment for this story.

Contracting records indicate and Fuchs confirmed that the agreement with EPA was Go BIG Media's first federal government contract.

Go BIG Media's performance period for its contract with EPA ran from Feb. 2 to Feb. 9, the records show. The administrator's office provided the agreement's funding.

The contract was competed under simplified acquisition procedures, or SAP, which are used by agencies to move quickly to make smaller purchases. There were two offers received for the contract.

Wilcox didn't name the other vendor that made the pricier bid for the contract.

EPA has contracted with another Republican consulting firm during Pruitt's tenure at the agency.

Definers Corp., a Republican-run public affairs firm, signed a \$120,000 contract with EPA in December last year to provide media clipping services. But soon after the firm signed the agreement, it attracted scrutiny from Democrats and environmental groups.

The contract ended up being canceled, and Definers decided to no longer do business with the federal government (Greenwire, Dec. 19, 2017).

Asked whether he worried about a similar backlash, Fuchs with Go BIG Media said he was not.

"No," Fuchs said. "The work's done, and we got paid pretty quickly."

NJ.com

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2018/03/trump_epa_superfund_pick_conflict_of_interest.html

Trump's latest EPA pick works for company linked to NJ Superfund site

By Michael Sol Warren, 3/8/18, 2:00 PM

The candidate that President Donald Trump has picked to oversee the cleanup of Superfund sites around the country is currently employed by one of the companies responsible for some toxic sites in N.J.

On March 2, the Trump administration announced that Peter Wright had been nominated to lead the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Land and Emergency Management. That office is responsible for overseeing the cleanup of Superfund sites, the nation's most toxic and polluted areas.

New Jersey currently has 114 designated Superfund sites, more than any other state in the nation.

"Peter is exceptionally qualified to lead the Office of Land and Emergency Management," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a press release. "He has the expertise and experience necessary to implement our ambitious goals for cleaning up the nation's contaminated lands quickly and thoroughly."

Since 1999, Wright has worked as a senior attorney for Dow Chemical. In his position with Dow, Wright has worked on the company's cases involving Superfund and pollution remediation according to the EPA.

"Peter Wright has been a valuable member of Dow's legal team with a focus on environmental, regulatory, operations and commercial matters for the past 18 years," Dow spokeswoman Rachelle Schikorra said in an email.

Wright's long career with Dow has alarmed New Jersey environmentalists.

"This is one of the worst nominations ever made, by even this president," said Jeff Tittel, the director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, in a press release. "Wright spent his career fighting to prevent cleanup of toxic sites as a corporate lawyer for Dow Chemical Company. His nomination is a risk to public health and the environment."

The federal agency has a new list of Superfund sites that are cleaned up and ready for redevelopment, and a South Jersey site made the cut.

Dow Chemical and its subsidiaries are currently listed as responsible parties for more than 100 Superfund sites around the nation, according to analysis by the Associated Press.

In New Jersey, that includes the Ventron/Velsicol Superfund site and the adjacent Berry's Creek Study Area in Wood-Ridge. In its filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Dow describes the Wood-Ridge site as some of the company's "largest potential environmental liabilities." Dow is responsible for \$80 million in remediation expenses on the site as of Dec. 31, 2017; the company spent \$7 million on clean-up at the site last year.

The Wood-Ridge site was home to a mercury processing plant that was operated by multiple companies from 1927 to 1974; first by F.W. Berk and Company, then by the Wood Ridge Chemical Corporation and finally by the Ventron Corporation. Philadelphia-based chemical manufacturer Rohm and Haas, a subsidiary of Dow, is the successor of Ventron.

While the plant was in operation, the various operating companies dumped mercury-contaminated waste on the site, making the soil and groundwater toxic.

The pollution also affected Berry's Creek, a 6.5-mile long creek that flows through Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, Rutherford, Teterboro and Wood-Ridge before emptying into the Hackensack River. The Wood-Ridge site was placed on the Superfund list in 1984.

Wright's nomination also raises questions among environmental groups like about whether or not other polluted Garden State sites will receive Superfund status.

Of particular interest is a plume of toxic chemicals contaminating the groundwater below hundreds of homes in Pompton Lakes. Residents have renewed a push to have the site placed on the Superfund list after a recently published investigation by NorthJersey.com outlined the extent of the pollution and decades of delayed clean-up action.

The source of the Pompton Lakes pollution is a DuPont factory that operated until 1994. Though the site is now owned by Chemours, DuPont could be listed as a responsible polluter if the site was placed on the Superfund list.

DuPont and Dow merged last year; and environmentalists note it is possible that Wright could be responsible for deciding whether or not his former employer has to spend millions of dollars to clean up Pompton Lakes.

Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/03/08/environmental-protection-agency-animal-testing-tax-dollars/>

REVEALED: EPA Animal Testing Studies Forced Rats To Inhale Diesel Exhaust, Smog

By Michael Bastasch, 3/8/18, 9:35 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released a draft strategy to reduce animal testing, but the agency has been using thousands of animals every year in taxpayer-funded experiments.

EPA's animal testing facility used about 20,000 animals a year, including rodents, rabbits and fish, according to watchdog group White Coat Waste-reviewed contract solicitation.

EPA published the results of at least 20 animal exposure studies in the past two years, based on a search for such studies in the agency's science database. These experiments exposed lab rats to air pollutants EPA claims can be deadly in humans.

"Americans don't like, want or need these outdated, expensive and deadly EPA animal tests that are siphoning money off of important programs that can actually help taxpayers and the environment," White Coat Waste Project Advocacy and Public Policy Vice President Justin Goodman told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

Scientists often fund and carry out these experiments at EPA's National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (NHEERL) in North Carolina. That lab also conducts controversial human exposure studies.

EPA came under fire in 2014 for testing air pollutants on humans without properly disclosing the risks. The agency's inspector general criticized EPA for exposing people with health issues and the elderly to high levels of pollutants without disclosing cancer and mortality risks.

EPA claims there's no safe level of exposure for humans to find particulate matter — a component of diesel exhaust — and smog, also called ozone. EPA animal studies exposed lab rats to high levels of both pollutants for hours at a time.

President Donald Trump's administration's 2019 budget proposal calls for slashing NHEERL's funding from \$115 million to \$71 million. Goodman and Florida Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz want EPA animal exposure studies to be cut from the budget as well.

"I am deeply disturbed that the EPA is spending millions of taxpayers' dollars for misleading

and gruesome pollution tests where lab animals are fed things like lard and coconut oil, forced to breathe diesel exhaust and smog, shocked and killed,” Gaetz told TheDCNF.

EPA released a draft policy Wednesday to promote alternative testing methods to reduce the use of animals in scientific studies as part of chemical safety legislation passed in 2016.

EPA developed the strategy in consultation with animal welfare groups, and the agency intends progress toward reducing then eliminating animal testing studies in the coming years.

“The strategic plan is intended to promote the development and use of alternative test methods to reduce, refine and replace vertebrate animal testing,” Nancy Beck, who heads EPA’s chemical safety office, told TheDCNF.

Animal testing does have scientific merits, for example, in medical fields where the impacts of certain drugs are unknown. Vaccines for polio and other diseases were developed with animal testing, according to the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science.

Critics say the process is fraught with problems when testing air pollutants on rats and applying those findings to humans.

“Mice are not little people when it comes to studying the potential health effects, like cancer, of low-level exposures to chemicals in the environment,” JunkScience.com Publisher Steve Milloy told TheDCNF.

Milloy also questioned why EPA still exposed lab rats to diesel exhaust and smog, despite claiming there’s “no safe level” of such pollutants for human exposure. Milloy is a critic of EPA’s air pollution claims but noted the hypocrisy of claiming pollutants to be deadly then testing them on animals and humans.

“Generally, in order to demonstrate that a chemicals can cause cancer in a rodent or other lab

animal, the researcher will have to literally almost poison the animal,” Milloy said. He spent decades scrutinizing EPA science policies and practices.

“In addition to the physiological differences between mice and men, laboratory exposures to chemicals are typically nothing like real-life exposures,” Milloy added.

White Coat Waste identified most abstracts of EPA animal exposure studies do not to explain specific methods, but some give details about how lab rats were exposed to diesel exhaust, smog and other pollutants.

Lab rats were “fasted for six hours and then” force-fed high-fat food through a tube in a March 2017 study. Rats then had breathing and blood tested. Previous work “used treadmill exercise stress in rats to unmask the priming effects of air pollution inhalation,” the study also noted.

Lab rats, some of which were “spontaneously hypertensive,” in other studies, were exposed to high levels of diesel exhaust for hours at a time then given heart medication to see how they responded.

A 2016 study examined how rats responded to ozone exposure after having their adrenal glands removed. Rats were exposed to ozone for four hour periods over two days, four days after the surgery.

Researchers used a “mobile reaction chamber” to expose rats to smog in another experiment. Rats, one day later, were anesthetized, given heart medication, and stuck with a probe to measure the response.

“This is the kind of waste and abuse at the EPA that needs to stop, and I’m glad that Administrator Pruitt is prioritizing the replacement of tests like these with more efficient, effective and humane alternatives to animal tests,” Gaetz said.

The federal government spends as much as \$14.5 billion per year on animal experimentation, White Coast Waste found in 2013. Some taxpayer-funded projects went on for decades and resulted in the cruel treatment of animals, the group said.

NHEERL did not respond to TheDCNF's request for comment in time for publication.

E&E News PM

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1060075849/search?keyword=EPA>

EPA taking comment on plan to scrap oil and gas standards

By Sean Reilly, 3/8/18

U.S. EPA is set to open a 45-day public comment period on its plans to scrap emissions reduction guidelines for existing oil and gas facilities.

Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt signed off last week on the proposed withdrawal of what are formally known as "control techniques guidelines" issued in 2016 to curb releases of ozone-forming volatile organic compounds (Energywire, March 2).

Given that EPA is reconsidering its related 2016 methane rule for new and modified oil and gas sources, the agency "believes it is prudent to withdraw the CTG in its entirety," according to a notice set for publication in tomorrow's Federal Register.

In sunlight, volatile organic compounds react with nitrogen oxides to form ground-level ozone, a lung irritant linked to asthma attacks in children and wider-ranging problems for people with chronic respiratory ailments.

After tightening the air quality standard for ozone in 2015 to 70 parts per billion, EPA is in the midst of determining which parts of the country are in nonattainment.

In a separate final rule also scheduled for release tomorrow, the agency sets out the five basic levels of nonattainment, ranging from "marginal" to "extreme," along with the ozone thresholds that trigger them and the related timetables for coming into compliance.

The system relies on the same methods the agency used in implementing the 1997 and 2008 ozone standards, according to the final rule. Publication in the Federal Register opens the door for any challengers to bring a lawsuit before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit within 60 days.

Last month, the agency dropped a proposed rule that apparently would have relied on a different classification system (E&E News PM, Feb. 14).

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http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=129322140&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Sensors, Health Megastudy Offer Chance to Reset Air, Toxic Limits

By Sara Merken and Steven Gibb, 3/9/18

Combining high-tech sensors with major new federal health research on more than a million people could lead to breakthroughs in setting chemical safety and air pollution standards, scientists said.

The data collected from the research will be like moving from “a magnifying glass to an electron microscope” in understanding environmentally related disease, according to health scientist Robert DeMott, with the Ramboll consultancy.

The “All of Us” Research Program—slated for spring release by the National Institutes of Health—will combine data on more than 1 million individuals’ geographically specific environmental exposures with known health factors to tease apart the genetic, lifestyle, and environmental components of disease.

Potential discoveries in environmental health—such as how air pollution contributes to cardiovascular and chronic disease—are part of the program's goals. All of Us will leverage environmental health data through personal sensors, federal agency data, and personal tests for pesticides and metals, the program's data head, Joshua Denny with Vanderbilt University, told Bloomberg Environment.

Everyday Exposures in Reach

The effort provides an “incredible engine for research” on challenges that bedevil environmental health scientists, according to Columbia University's Andrea Baccarelli. This includes hard-to-detect health effects of low-doses of exposure to hundreds of chemicals, he said.

DeMott, a toxicologist, said the research could chart new ground for regulators. Currently, many air and chemical standards are set by the Environmental Protection Agency using very high chemical exposures given to test animals to predict the health impacts on people of lower, everyday exposures.

“The general public really wants to know what could happen at much lower, commonly encountered environmental levels,” DeMott said.

“The new big data approaches could overcome this gap supplying both updated information about healthy environments and upgraded certainty—and thus security—in the characterizations [of pollutants] we make,” he added.

Air pollution researchers expanding into big data studies of millions of U.S., Canadian, and European citizens agree.

“Big Data—though having some limitations—will be increasingly important to understanding air pollution and health, especially testing whether there are associations and effects at the lowest levels of exposure, even below current standards,” according to Dan Greenbaum, president of the Health Effects Institute, which studies air pollution.

Scare the Public?

But some scientists are raising concerns about how information on chemicals in people's bodies will be communicated.

Conveying biomonitoring data would be valuable if they are tied to safe versus unsafe levels so people can compare, according to Michael Dourson, a toxicologist with the Ohio-based Toxicological Excellence for Risk Assessment who had previously been picked to head the EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. “That would be hugely useful. Otherwise, this information by itself is likely going to scare many folks,” according to Dourson.

But the EPA says this line of research will continue to expand in the future.

“The integration of EPA air quality data and personal health data has been and will continue to be integral in informing relevant environmental health questions,” an EPA spokesperson told Bloomberg Environment.

Programs such as All of Us will generate genetics measures “with unprecedented numbers of individuals” to identify risk factors and biochemical effects of air pollution exposure, the spokesperson said.

Enhanced Sensors for Asthma

Wearable sensors, for example, can track how long an individual was exposed to major sources of air pollution from highways and industrial sites through GPS sensors, according to biostatistician Sandra Eckel with the University of Southern California. She is working on an NIH-backed project to develop sensor-based monitoring systems to study asthma, a disease with multiple causes and triggers.

Sensors in popular smart watches and phones are easily accessible, scientists said at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [event](#) on environmental health data integration Feb. 20-21.

NIH will use wireless sensors to passively collect personal information, which is a big shift away from annual self-reported health questionnaires, which can suffer from recall bias.

Sensors could be used to collect health data such as activity levels and sleep and heart rate, and additional sensors in homes and cars could passively monitor temperature and air quality, according to the program's initial research protocol. A one-year pilot program will distribute up to 10,000 Fitbit activity trackers.

Environment Data Collection

In a few years, the program could potentially distribute environmental sensors or test biosamples for pesticides, heavy metals, and other exposures, Vanderbilt's Denny said.

Over time, public environmental data will link to participants' current and past homes and workplaces to determine long-term exposure and the causes of disease, Denny added.

"The beauty of a 1 million person study is the ability to look at gene and environment interactions," said Gwen Collman, who directs scientific program administration at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

USC's Eckel added that “We've never before been able to produce such large quantities of data with extraordinarily high time and location resolution at the personal level.”

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=129322143&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

House Votes to Ease Toxic Air Pollutant Rule for Coal Waste Plants

By Jennifer Lu, 3/9/18

Power plants that turn coal waste into energy would be exempt from some of the EPA's toxic air pollutant standards, under a bill passed by the House March 8.

The bill—called Satisfying Energy Needs and Saving the Environment Act, or SENSE (H.R. 1119)—was sponsored by Rep. Keith Rothfus (R-Pa.) and passed by a vote of 215-189.

It would benefit 18 facilities that burn coal waste, three of which are in Pennsylvania. Those plants would have to control emissions of either hydrogen chloride or sulfur dioxide, but not both, under the bill.

“Without the SENSE act, five coal-to-energy facilities will close and their remediation will end,” Rothfus said on the floor prior to voting.

Proponents see energy derived from coal waste leftover from coal mining as a form of environmental remediation.

Coal waste is often disposed in giant piles in states like Pennsylvania. The piles themselves are a hazard and can catch fire, or heavy metal toxins in the waste end up seeping into the water supply.

Those against the bill say that energy industries shouldn't be subject to less stringent emissions standards for processing waste.

Future of Refuse?

Coal refuse plants would likely go out of business by April 2019, when a waiver for waste-to-power companies under the Environmental Protection Agency's mercury rule expires, Sean Lane, executive vice president for government affairs at Olympus Power LLC, previously told Bloomberg Environment.

The SENSE Act does not yet have a companion bill in the Senate.

Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), who advocated for the SENSE Act in 2016, has said on several occasions that waste coal plants were the “only viable option” for removing the “gob piles that blot Pennsylvania's landscape.”

“Senator Toomey applauds the House passage of the SENSE Act and will continue, in addition to looking for opportunities for passage in the Senate, his work to encourage the EPA to address this issue through regulatory reform,” Kasia Mulligan, Toomey's communication director, said prior to the vote.

The House passed a similar bill in 2016, which was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public works, but it didn't go further.

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Senators Seek Time to Strike Deal on Farm Emissions Bill

By Sylvia Carignan, 3/9/18

Senators hope a federal appeals court will give them time to cut a deal on a bill that would exempt farms and ranches from air emissions reporting requirements.

The Environmental Protection Agency should ask the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to hold off making final its decision on regulating air emissions from farms until Senators can sort out the specifics of a bill erasing certain emission reporting requirements, Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) said at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Superfund subcommittee hearing March 8.

Some farmers and ranchers say the emissions reporting requirements create unnecessary, time-consuming paperwork, while others say they're needed to protect public health.

The bill ([S. 2421](#))—which was introduced by Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.)—has the support of 33 senators. Legislators are racing to get the bill to a vote before the court makes its decision final.

“We'll do everything we can to move it forward quickly and as expeditiously as possible,” Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's Superfund subcommittee, said after that panel met on the legislation March 8.

The bill would have enough votes to invoke cloture, but it may require more tweaking before it's ready for a vote, Rounds said.

Reporting Required But Methods Lacking

As a result of the 2017 D.C. Cir. decision in *Waterkeeper Alliance v. EPA*, farms with animal operations that release certain amounts of hazardous substances into the air could be required to start reporting those emissions as early as May 1, or whenever the court issues its mandate.

But, the EPA acknowledges, there's no generally accepted way to estimate those emissions. The agency says it's working on that, but its methodologies won't be completed before the court issues its mandate.

Farmers are concerned about having to report emissions accurately without an accepted method.

“On May 1, it's going to hit the fan,” rancher Todd Mortensen with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association said before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's Superfund subcommittee March 8. “There's so much science that's lacking here that there's no way I can make a report,” he said.

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, requires the EPA to define “reportable quantities” of substances. The quantities, which differ between each of the substances regulated under CERCLA, determine when a release must be reported. For example, releases of ammonia that total 100 or more pounds must be reported.

Van Hollen sought to define whether certain sizes of farms should be exempt, but the committee didn't settle on a clear answer.

Rounds indicated that may be something Fischer considers if she makes changes to the bill.

E&E Daily

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060075883/search?keyword=EPA>

Dems, GOP search for compromise on farm air pollution bill

By Marc Heller, 3/9/18

Legislation to spare farmers from air pollution reporting requirements under the federal Superfund law may need revisions before the Senate acts on it, a sponsor said yesterday.

Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) told reporters that lawmakers may want to clarify responsibilities between federal and local governments in the regulation of air emissions on livestock farms, the subject of a hearing in the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight, which he leads.

Rounds said he'll leave any decision about revisions to the chief sponsor of S. 2421, Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), but that he could see leaving more authority in the hands of state and local government.

The bill would exempt farmers from reporting emissions of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act.

In some cases, Rounds said, environmental regulation of agriculture is best left to local officials to sort out — a process that's still evolving with air emissions around farms.

"There are still individuals who feel that local states and local units of government who participate in zoning and also have their own guidelines still have debates about what the right way is to do it at that level," Rounds said. "That's not going to go away."

The legislation comes in response to a federal court ruling last year that blocked U.S. EPA from exempting farms from the emission-reporting requirement under CERCLA, which applies to any facility generating 100 pounds or more a day of ammonia.

Lawmakers said Congress didn't intend Superfund to apply to farms, which generate ammonia from manure that's stored or spread on fields (Greenwire, March 6).

The court said EPA didn't have authority under the law to grant exemptions, and the agency has told farmers they can comply by estimating emissions based on rules of thumb EPA spelled out in published guidelines.

With a court-imposed deadline of May 1 for EPA to comply with the court ruling, Congress doesn't have much time to work out a compromise, Rounds said.

The chairman said he's confident the bill, with 33 co-sponsors, can easily overcome procedural hurdles and pass the Senate if lawmakers attach it to other legislation.

He didn't say when the EPW Committee might schedule a markup.

"I think we'll look at every avenue available to us," Rounds said. "We know we've got a limited amount of time in which to respond."

Potential compromise

At yesterday's hearing, an additional point of potential compromise emerged regarding the kind of farm that should have to comply.

Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.), who described a "wretched, horrible smell" from a pig farm he saw in Duplin County, N.C., said the regulations should be targeted at large concentrated animal feeding operations, not pasture-based livestock farms.

Asking pasture-based farms to report under CERCLA is "absurd," Booker said. "Larger CAFOs are a different issue." Congress, Booker said, needs to "rebalance the scales" in spelling out how CERCLA applies to agriculture.

None of the three witnesses at the hearing operates a CAFO. One of the panelists, South Dakota rancher Todd Mortenson, said he understands the difference among farms and that his 1,295 cattle are spread across 19,000 acres — meaning the concentration of emissions is very low.

Because the reporting requirement is based on total release of ammonia, not concentration, Mortenson said, he still has to report under the regulations.

Ammonia and hydrogen sulfide are dangerous chemicals, according to EPA, and can cause respiratory harm at certain levels. They're also harmful to livestock, particularly poultry in confined areas, said Bill Satterfield, executive director of Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc. in Georgetown, Del.

"Lots of effort is done to keep levels low," Satterfield told the subcommittee, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service helps farmers cover the cost of measures to reduce ammonia production and emissions.

EPA hasn't given farmers much clarity on who has to report and how, Satterfield said, leaving them "almost like chickens with their heads cut off."

'Factory farm agriculture'

While the legislation might be subject to tweaks, one witness urged senators to ditch it entirely.

Mark Kuhn, supervisor of Floyd County, Iowa, said CAFOs shouldn't be treated differently from any other pollution-producing facility.

Iowa hogs, cattle and poultry produce 50 million tons of manure a year, and the CAFO industry there is "industrialized, factory farm agriculture," he said.

A pharmaceutical plant has to report dangerous emissions, Kuhn said. "Why should it be any different for a corporate factory farm?"

Lawmakers may also have to sort out whether the legislation interferes with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, intended to help communities prepare for chemical emergencies.

Fischer's bill doesn't mention that law, but Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) said the court ruling throwing out EPA's farm exemption said cutting reporting requirements under CERCLA would automatically cut similar requirements under the Community Right-to-Know Act.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrats-call-ethanol-mandate-an-environmental-flop/article/2651092>

Democrats call ethanol mandate an environmental 'flop'

By John Siciliano, 3/8/18, 4:21 PM

A group of Democrats apologized for the failed experiment that is the nation's ethanol mandate on Thursday, calling it a "flop" and introducing legislation that would phase out corn ethanol use in six years.

"We made a mistake," said Henry Waxman of California, the former Democratic chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, who drove the passage of the Renewable Fuel Standard, or RFS, in a comprehensive energy bill passed in 2007.

"The law hasn't worked out as we intended," Waxman said in joining lawmakers on a call with reporters Thursday to talk about new legislation that seeks to fix that mistake. Waxman left Congress in 2015.

Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., and Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., introduced the Greener Fuels Act, saying that the Environmental Protection Agency's RFS has been a failure for the environment.

"We've now had more than a decade of experience with it, and it had the best of intentions," Welch said. "But it has turned out to be a well-intended flop."

Welch said those who supported the RFS in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 were mistaken to think it would help curb climate change and that there is ample evidence it has made it worse.

"It actually doesn't cut down on greenhouse gas emissions, it expands them," Welch said. "It's had a significant impact on overplanting in fragile areas of the corn belt. It has had significant impacts on small engines. And it's also had a significant impact on feed prices ... and there is a lot of evidence it has increased the cost of food."

His bill would cap the corn ethanol mandate at 9.7 percent of the nation's fuel mix, while moving

to phase it out in 2023 and barring higher ethanol fuel blends from being sold. Many of those changes sound close to Republican-led bills introduced in the past.

The bill also would change the program to ensure that truly renewable biofuels, those derived from agriculture waste and plant cellulose, are given proper incentives under the RFS.

“Corn is not good for the environment, but other cellulosic fuels are,” Welch said.

He said lawmakers from both parties have tried to address the problems with the RFS but the environmental factors have been missing. The Greener Fuels Act looks to address those.

Welch and Udall say their bill would complement legislation being drafted by Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas. Cornyn is developing a bill that looks to resolve an economic concern between the oil refiners and the corn farmers.

The Democratic lawmakers say their bill would help achieve many of the same goals that Cornyn and Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, are looking to resolve regarding the high price of ethanol credits, otherwise known as Renewable Identification Numbers, or RINs. The price of RINs has made it more difficult for refiners to comply with the mandate. Many independent refiners must buy the credits to meet the ethanol blending requirements.

Cruz sat down with President Trump twice last week to discuss a compromise that would cap the price of RINs at 10 cents, while allowing more ethanol to be blended into the gasoline supply.

The Democratic bill's reduction in ethanol use to 9.7 percent would help keep the RIN price stable, Welch said. But it would not help the ethanol industry reach its goal of blending higher amounts of ethanol. Cruz is trying to work with ethanol backers in the Senate to allow 15 percent ethanol fuel to be blended year-round, which would drive up corn ethanol use.

Udall said the bill also would help farmers restore cornfields to pasture and wildlife habitat by

using a 10-cents-per-RIN fee to fund a new Private Land Protection and Restoration Fund.

Nearly all the major biofuel trade groups that support the RFS said they oppose the Democratic bill. Emily Skor, president and CEO of the pro-ethanol group Growth Energy, said the Welch-Udall bill was "dead on arrival."

She said the bill appears to be oil companies trying "to ghostwrite legislation for environmental front groups," alluding to the fact that the oil industry has tried to get the EPA to approve limiting the ethanol mandate to 9.7 percent.

Welch and Udall were joined on the call by the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation, which adamantly support eliminating corn ethanol from the RFS.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060075953/search?keyword=EPA>

Court stays SO2 requirements for Ark. plants

By Sean Reilly, 3/9/18

In a significant win for Entergy Corp., a federal appeals court has stayed implementation of stricter sulfur dioxide emissions requirements for several Arkansas coal-fired power plants laid out in an Obama-era regional haze reduction plan.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued the stay Wednesday in a short order that gave no

explanation for its decision. Entergy had renewed its request for the stay in January, warning that it will have to "prematurely" shutter the White Bluff and Independence plants in 2021 if the existing limits remain in place.

While Arkansas regulators are working on a substitute for that part of U.S. EPA's 2016 haze reduction plan, Entergy must meanwhile start spending millions of dollars this year to begin planning for development of replacement power, the company's lawyers wrote in the amended stay motion in January. Although that planning may turn out to be unneeded, Entergy "cannot simply gamble that EPA will approve the state's proposed replacement rules and that the courts will uphold those rules," they said.

Opposed were the National Parks Conservation Association and the Sierra Club. Entergy had failed to show it would suffer "irreparable harm," the groups said in their response. They added that the company had made the "bizarre and unprecedented argument" that it was facing harm because of its own decision not to comply with the sulfur dioxide requirements.

The Independence and White Bluff plants, which have a combined generating capacity of about 3,300 megawatts, are Arkansas' two top polluters, the groups' attorney wrote. EPA had previously forecast that its 2016 plan would eventually cut their emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides by almost 70,000 tons annually, according to the groups' filing.

Under the Trump administration, EPA took no position on Entergy's stay request; the agency has already struck the portion of the 2016 plan that mandated new controls for nitrogen oxides and instead agreed to rely on Arkansas' participation in the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) emissions trading program to comply with regional haze goals (Greenwire, Feb. 9).

Entergy's request was backed by Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge (R), who welcomed the court's ruling. The decision has protected Arkansas residents "from a one-size-fits-all approach that would have passed massive costs on to consumers," Rutledge said in a news release.

The stay order also applies to the Flint Creek Power Plant, a 528-MW facility jointly owned by the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. and Southwestern Electric Power Co., a branch of American Electric Power Co. Inc.

The regional haze program, dating back to 1999 in its current form, aims to restore unclouded views to 156 national parks and wilderness areas by 2064.

In issuing the 2016 plan, EPA said the tighter pollution limits would improve visibility in the Caney Creek Wilderness and the Upper Buffalo Wilderness, both of which are in Arkansas, as well as the Hercules Glades Wilderness and the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060075941/search?keyword=EPA>

Scientist survey flagged as spam

By Arianna Skibell, 3/9/18

The Union of Concerned Scientists' periodic survey of federal scientists caused a bit of a kerfuffle at U.S. EPA last month.

For the ninth time since 2005, the science advocacy group sent out a survey to more than 63,000 federal scientists across 16 agencies to gather information about what's happening inside the federal government in relation to scientific integrity.

Andrew Rosenberg, director of the Center for Science and Democracy at UCS, said his staff reached out to the agencies to let them know the survey was forthcoming: a memo EPA apparently missed.

"The unannounced, unauthorized, and perhaps illegal message found below this message was sent to me today," Brian Melzian, an EPA oceanographer in Rhode Island, wrote in a Feb. 12 email to EPA's Computer Security Incident Response Center (CSIRC) and others obtained by UCS.

"Because the U.S. EPA employees have NOT received any information about this 'Study,' this study may NOT be legitimate, legal, and proper for EPA employees to complete," he wrote.

Melzian continued: "Finally, if the message found below is legitimate and not bogus, these organizations have been grossly negligent and incompetent for distributing this message without first being authorized and approved by EPA."

Rosenberg said while UCS did inform EPA the survey was coming, he is not required to do so and it's up to the agencies to choose whether and how they inform employees about it.

The survey comes at a particularly sensitive time as climate and other science advocates worry the Trump administration has politicized and delegitimized scientific inquiry (Climatewire, Aug. 9, 2017).

While the survey will remain open for another couple of weeks, the response rate so far has been low — a fact Rosenberg attributes to fear of retaliation.

"It suggests the climate and culture for scientists is really fearful," he said. "The culture we've seen more broadly in this administration has been either dismissal or hostility toward science."

A spokesman for EPA said it didn't make sense to him that employees would be afraid to fill out the survey since it is anonymous but declined to comment further.

As of March 2, response rates for EPA hovered around 2 percent, with 296 completed surveys,

compared with NOAA's response rate, which was 4.1 percent with 460 completed surveys. Still, in 2015 NOAA's response rate was 19.6 percent with 2,388 completed responses.

While EPA employees did not participate in 2015 — the agency said it would conduct its own scientific integrity survey — it did join in previous years. In 2007, under President George W. Bush, the agency's response rate was 29.3 percent with 1,586 completed surveys, according to UCS records.

The poor response rate this year at EPA may also stem from the EPA CSIRC's recommendation that the survey be marked as spam.

Tammy Stein with EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center forwarded UCS's email to CSIRC, the technology office and all regional information security officers and wrote: "Suspicious activity."

CSIRC responded to Stein saying an analysis of the UCS survey request determined the email was SPAM "stemming from an unknown entity."

"CSIRC recommends that if this email was unsolicited, that you treat the email as SPAM, do not click any links, and delete the email," the email states.

However, the following day an email from the Office of General Counsel's Ethics Office states that employees are allowed to participate in the survey if they do so on their own time and do not use a government computer.

Rosenberg said even with permission, employees might feel cautious about taking the survey. He said receiving a note from the Ethics Office, regardless of the contents, can act as a red flag.

"You read the email and if you're a cautious civil servant you'd say, I'm not touching this," he said. "EPA is now saying the staff level is below the years of the Reagan administration after big

cutbacks, so people have a good reason to worry about their jobs."

He added: "What you want them to be doing is worrying about science, not worrying about their jobs."

Joel Clement, the former top climate policy expert at the Interior Department before he resigned last summer, said he's also concerned about why employees aren't filing out the survey.

"I worry there is some degree of intimidation going on there that's keeping them from filling it out," he said. "It certainly matches their approach at Interior right now, which is to avoid consulting with the career staff, to cut them out of the decisionmaking process and in some cases to intimate them."

Clement, who resigned in protest from Interior after he was transferred to an office that oversees oil and gas royalties, joined UCS as a senior fellow earlier this year. He said the morale at Interior now is "probably as bad as it's ever been."

He said in particular, the dismantling of Interior advisory committees has taken its toll on staff. Without the landscape conservation cooperatives (LCCs), which the Fish and Wildlife Service oversees, an effective avenue for engaging stakeholders and affecting meaningful policy has been lost, he added.

"These were multi-stakeholder, problem-solving committees addressing things like climate impacts," he said. "They were doing all the right things in terms of sustainable solutions, but because they were an Obama-era program, they shut down the steering committees."

"Anything that has a whiff of climate change is being hobbled or deleted," he said.

E&E Climatewire

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060075899/search?keyword=EPA>

West Wing disorder leaves energy officials feeling jittery

By Zack Colman and Robin Bravender, 3/9/18

Thinning White House ranks are leaving the energy industry with few inroads to President Trump and further emboldening agency chiefs to go it alone on important policy, according to sources close to the administration.

Already operating with few deckhands, the White House has witnessed key departures in the energy space in recent weeks. More are expected soon. Meanwhile, companies aren't sure whom to call at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Some worry that another staff exodus would further diminish access. And there's uncertainty about who will be driving the president's energy agenda for the remainder of his term, and who will be refereeing contentious policy issues like fights over the renewable fuel standard and fuel economy standards.

Companies are "very worried about it because you start to run out of people that you trust to know what they're doing, to actually be there anymore to answer the phone," said an executive in the refining industry. "The higher up you go, is this guy as the president increasingly isolated and on his own? ... Who's got his ear at this point?"

Trump's top economic adviser, Gary Cohn — whose office oversees domestic energy policy — announced his resignation this week after losing a high-profile battle on steel and aluminum tariffs. Trump's top international energy and climate aide, George David Banks, left last month. The president's nominee to lead the Council on Environmental Quality, Kathleen Hartnett White, withdrew her nomination earlier this year, as her confirmation prospects appeared grim. There's been no replacement announced for that nomination, and Trump still hasn't named a leader for the White House science office.

Oil and gas firms took Trump's contentious decision on the steel and aluminum levies, which industry opposed, as a sign of growing staffing problems. "The issue has been raised more than once that this tariff thing could've been avoided, or at least winnowed down significantly, if we had just had some more folks in the room on the staff level," said an industry source.

Given the staffing shortages, "the power and force and capability of the interagency process is currently significantly diminished" on the energy and environmental front, said Jim Connaughton, who was White House CEQ chairman during the George W. Bush administration.

But, Connaughton added, "there are some very good professionals that remain, especially in the core energy space and the infrastructure space." He pointed to D.J. Gribbin, a former banker working on infrastructure policy under Cohn, and Mike Catanzaro, the top White House adviser on domestic energy policy. So despite a "significant reduction in capacity," he said, there's "still a relatively good capability to carry out the interagency process that's necessary to advancing almost every significant environmental or energy issue of consequence."

Few expect the administration's overall energy agenda to change. It will still consist of more fossil fuel extraction, more exports and more infrastructure, like pipelines. But some thornier issues might be harder to resolve absent experienced White House staff.

Significant policy measures that pit similar industries against each other require a deft touch at the White House. Managing biofuels producers, agriculture, refiners and oil producers in negotiations over the renewable fuel standard is no easy task. The same goes for the roiling feud between agencies and automakers over fuel economy standards.

"If you look at the overall narrative of they're having a very hard time staffing people, they're looking at, 'How are we going to fill these positions?' when they're already short on staff, the energy conversation fits right in there," said an energy industry lobbyist familiar with the White House.

Some in the energy industry are anxiously waiting to see what happens next.

"There's a little concern," said another energy industry lobbyist close to the administration. "Everyone in town thinks most people in the White House are in danger of leaving."

Cohn's departure in particular is seen as a blow to many in the energy world.

"Gary has played a crucial role in defending policies that don't pick winners and losers and that are based on the facts," said Banks, who left the White House in mid-February.

And the refining industry executive said that Cohn's presence in the White House "has been a great security blanket to the folks in the C-suites." The former Goldman Sachs Group Inc. executive has been "the default guy" for energy interests to talk to, that person said. "If you can get to Cohn or his folks at the NEC, you know you're going to be heard."

Rise of Cabinet bosses?

One consequence of the thinning ranks could be expanded influence of agency bosses like U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

Pruitt, in particular, could get more leverage as the result of a White House exodus.

"I think this means Pruitt's political stock is rising," said the energy industry lobbyist. "Let's look at where the reservoir of energy staff might be. It's sometimes kiddingly said that a lot of energy policy in the United States is really developed by the Environmental Protection Agency."

The EPA chief has already ingratiated himself with Trump by in part reflecting the president's desire to exit the Paris climate accord. Pruitt and Cohn were in opposing camps in that fight, with Pruitt coming out on top.

Since then, Pruitt has faced resistance from within the White House over his plans to advance a public debate to challenge mainstream climate science, although Trump privately told Pruitt he

supported the idea (Climatewire, Dec. 15, 2017). It's unclear whether staff shake-ups in the White House might clear the way for that debate.

"Administrator Pruitt has a fair degree of latitude and trust from the president in making the decisions he needs to make," said an oil and gas industry source.

That source said conversations on energy policy are still active with the White House, given the presence of people like Catanzaro, Gribbin, CEQ Chief of Staff Mary Neumayr and Alex Herrgott, who handles legislative affairs for CEQ. On top of that, the National Security Council and Office of Management and Budget bring resources to bear. Vice President Mike Pence's energy aide, Francis Brooke, also has taken on an active role.

Still, the balance is tilting toward agencies, said the industry source, who lamented the steel and aluminum tariffs. The source added that it's getting "tougher and tougher" to be heard in the White House.

"A lot of those conversations on energy and climate stuff are increasingly being shifted to the agency side — Interior, DOE, and (surprising to some) Treasury. EPA too," the source said in an email.

Banks said he's expecting agencies "to become much more active in the energy policy space, simply because in the first year of any administration, the White House is going to take a much more active role in defining the contours of any given policy." He added, "The administration has achieved that, so now it's up to the agencies to implement the president's vision for energy dominance."

It's natural for companies to converse with the agencies that regulate them in addition to the White House, said an agency source who meets frequently with the business community.

That said, the gaps in White House personnel will likely grow in the wake of Cohn's exit. That will strain the administration's capacity to handle competing interests and concerns, the agency source added.

"Cohn was such a stabilizing and moderating force," the agency source said. "He was so constructive. His departure makes it harder for the people who remain."

BNA

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=129322148&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Florida Wetlands, Dredging Permits Could Shift to State Control

By Chris Marr, 3/9/18

Dredge-and-fill permits in Florida, such as those being contested in a phosphate mine expansion project, would be administered by state regulators instead of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under a state Legislature-approved plan.

The Florida Senate gave final approval March 8 to H.B. 7043 by a vote of 35-1. The bill allows the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to administer Section 404 permits under the federal Clean Water Act.

The bill goes next to Gov. Rick Scott (R) for his signature. Scott's office didn't immediately respond to Bloomberg Environment's request for comment.

The state also needs Environmental Protection Agency approval to take over permitting. If the EPA gives it approval, Florida would become only the third state—after Michigan and New Jersey—to take over federal dredge-and-fill permitting since Congress gave states the option 40 years ago. Other states have considered the idea, but uncertainty remains over the types of federally protected waters that states can regulate.

EPA staff have been working with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection since July 2017 on preparing to take over dredge-and-fill permitting, EPA regional spokeswoman Dawn Harris-Young told Bloomberg Environment. After the state submits its full application, the EPA will have 120 days for a review that includes consulting with other federal agencies and holding a public hearing, she said.

Debate Over Effects

Supporters of Florida's plan, such as advocacy group Associated Industries of Florida, said it will streamline permitting by letting the the Department of Environmental Protection handle both state and federal permits for projects that affect wetlands and surface waters.

Environmental groups including the Sierra Club criticized the idea, saying the state environment department has inadequate staffing and that it's not clear how consultation on concerns such as endangered species impacts would work.

The Sierra Club has received funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the charitable organization founded by Michael Bloomberg, the ultimate owner of Bloomberg Environment.

The Department of Environmental Protection will go through a rulemaking process that includes taking public comment before it would assume control of federal permitting, according to spokeswoman Lauren Engel.

“This will ensure environmental protections remain just as stringent, if not more stringent, than the federal government's” while improving effectiveness and efficiency, she told Bloomberg Environment March 8.

Phosphate Mining

Projects that tend to require dredge-and-fill permits include construction developments and mining operations. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate

discharges of dredged or fill material into wetlands and other waters.

For example, the state assumption of Section 404 permitting could factor into future expansion plans for a major phosphate mining operator in Florida—fertilizer producer Mosaic Co., said Hannah Connor, a senior attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity.

“That’s likely something we have to keep our eyes on going forward,” Connor told Bloomberg Environment March 7.

The Center for Biological Diversity is in the midst of challenging the Section 404 permit the Army Corps of Engineers issued for a Mosaic mine expansion in Florida. An appeal is pending at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, after a lower federal court dismissed the case.

Mosaic is also seeking permits for three more mine expansions in Florida, she said.

Mosaic didn’t immediately respond to Bloomberg Environment’s requests for comment.

On a company website, Mosaic calls phosphate mining “one of the most regulated industrial activities in Florida” and says it can take five to seven years to get all the needed permits for a mine expansion.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 10:34:21 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: SENATE REPUBLICANS TO TRUMP: Thanks for the advice, but we're moving on from health care -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: MARK PUTNAM'S new ad in deep red Kentucky -- TAPPER: W.H. officials tricked by email prankster

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08/01/2017 06:31 AM EDT

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Driving the Day

Good Tuesday morning and welcome to August. **HERE'S AN IMPORTANT STORY** that developed yesterday late in the day when we were in the Capitol: **"Republicans ignore Trump's Obamacare taunts,"** by Burgess Everett and Jen Haberkorn: "Senate Republicans have no plans to revive their party-line attempts to repeal Obamacare this summer, despite President Donald Trump's increasing frustration over the chamber's failed attempts last week to gut the law.

"Until somebody shows us a way to get that elusive 50th vote, I think it's over,' said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the third-ranking Republican. 'Maybe lightning will strike and something will come together but I'm not holding my breath.' ... Privately, Republican aides said there is essentially no chance McConnell will take another shot at repealing Obamacare soon. On Monday, there was discussion among Senate staffers of a 'hard pivot to tax reform,' one Senate aide said. ...

"Do I think we should stay on health care until we get it done? I think it's time to move on to something else. Come back to health care when we've had more time to get beyond the moment we're in and see if we can't put some wins on the board,' said Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, a member of GOP leadership. 'Tax reform, infrastructure are the kinds of things we ought to be looking at.'" <http://politi.co/2vcYzpJ>

-- IN OTHER WORDS, members of the Senate don't really care what the president says they ought to do. Period.

NYT'S CARL HULSE: "Lesson for Trump: Hardball Against Senators Is a Game He Can Lose" <http://nyti.ms/2uQR2f0>

A QUICK REMINDER -- When the White House tells us -- as they did yesterday -- that tax reform is going to be done by September or October, remember that neither chamber has passed a budget resolution. Tax reform is very hard without reconciliation instructions (just ask Rich Rubin and Phil Mattingly!). And, if you've watched the squirming on, well, everything on the Hill, you wouldn't be surprised to hear that passing a budget isn't easy. This seems to be a bit lost on the White House. Oh, and by the way, in September and October, Congress also has to fund the government and lift the debt ceiling. This won't be quick and painless.

-- **PLAYBOOK SCOOPLET: SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** is wholeheartedly embracing the flood of outside group support for tax reform. From the speaker: "It is time to unleash the full potential of the American economy by creating a tax code that actually works for the middle class. A simpler, fairer tax system that puts working families first will strengthen our economy and generate more jobs. I am encouraged to see the Middle Class Growth Initiative, and American Action Network, working to give their voice to this critical issue, and I'm pleased for such allies and supportive efforts."

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- WHAT HOUSE DEMOCRATS WANT 2018 TO LOOK LIKE -- MARK PUTNAM, the top-flight Democratic ad maker, has cut a spot for Ret. Lt. Col. Amy McGrath, who is running against Rep. Andy Barr in a solid Republican district in Kentucky. The spot tells the story of McGrath's career -- she was the first female Marine to fly in an F-18 in combat and flew in 89 missions bombing al Qaeda and the Taliban. The ad has some familiar themes: Barr -- who she says is Mitch McConnell's hand-picked congressman -- wants to take health care away from people, according to McGrath. But the spot also highlights another theme in 2018: House Democrats are especially interested in veterans jumping in the race. The imagery in this ad shows how they might employ military ties in the midterm.

"This is my new mission: to take on a Congress full of career politicians who treat the people of Kentucky like they're disposable. Some are telling me a Democrat can't win that battle in Kentucky. That we can't take back our country for my kids and yours. We'll see about that." The ad ends showing her Marine dress uniform with all her medals, decorations and her personal sword, with the text "Amy McGrath: Democrat for Congress" on the screen. ***The two-minute spot*** <http://bit.ly/2vohv5j>

BUT, BUT, BUT -- "Democrats snub new party message," by Gabe Debenedetti, Elana Schor, and Heather Caygle: "Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi, and Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill will spend the next 15 months talking up the new 'Better Deal' economic message they unveiled last week. What's not clear is if anyone else will follow. The national party remains far from consensus on a unified message -- Democrats can't even agree on whether the party needs one. ... [N]ot every incumbent wants to be associated with the party's message. And many of the party's influential constituent groups and moneyed organizations are busy pursuing their own messaging and branding initiatives, and remain in the early stages of their own investigations into what went wrong in November. Some - including the Democratic National Committee

and individual state party committees - are busy preparing their own, independent lines of messaging." <http://politi.co/2uTGyKi>

BREAKING LATE MONDAY -- "Trump dictated son's misleading statement on meeting with Russian lawyer," by WaPo's Ashley Parker, Carol Leonnig, Phil Rucker and Tom Hamburger: "On the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Germany last month, President Trump's advisers discussed how to respond to a new revelation that Trump's oldest son had met with a Russian lawyer during the 2016 campaign - a disclosure the advisers knew carried political and potentially legal peril. The strategy, the advisers agreed, should be for Donald Trump Jr. to release a statement to get ahead of the story. They wanted to be truthful, so their account couldn't be repudiated later if the full details emerged.

"But within hours, at the president's direction, the plan changed. Flying home from Germany on July 8 aboard Air Force One, Trump personally dictated a statement in which Trump Jr. said that he and the Russian lawyer had 'primarily discussed a program about the adoption of Russian children' when they met in June 2016, according to multiple people with knowledge of the deliberations. The statement, issued to the New York Times as it prepared an article, emphasized that the subject of the meeting was 'not a campaign issue at the time.'" <http://wapo.st/2vnN67f>

JOHN KELLY'S DAY ONE -- "Kelly flexes muscle his first day on the job at White House," by AP's Vivian Salama and Jill Colvin: "Raised voices could be heard through the thick door to the Oval Office as John Kelly - then secretary of Homeland Security - offered some tough talk to President Donald Trump. Kelly, a whip-cracking retired general who was sworn in as White House chief of staff on Monday, had demanded to speak to the president alone after Trump complained loudly that the U.S. was admitting travelers from countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Haiti.

"Kelly first tried to explain to Trump that the admissions were standard - some people had legitimate reasons to visit the country - but the president insisted that it was making him look bad, according to an administration official familiar with the exchange about a month ago. Kelly then demanded that other advisers leave the room so he could speak to the president frankly. Trump refused at first, but agreed when Kelly insisted. It was an early indication that Kelly, a decorated retired Marine general who served three tours in Iraq, is not afraid to stand up to his commander-in-chief." <http://bit.ly/2uTrrRI>

... FOR THE RECORD -- "Kelly called Comey to express anger over firing, sources say," by CNN's Shimon Prokupecz and Pamela Brown: "New White House chief of staff John Kelly was so upset with how President Donald Trump handled the firing of FBI Director James Comey that Kelly called Comey afterward and said he was considering resigning, according to two sources familiar with a conversation between Kelly and Comey. Both sources cautioned that it was unclear how serious Kelly, then the secretary of homeland security, was about resigning himself. 'John was angry and hurt by what he saw and the way (Comey) was treated,' one of the sources said." <http://cnn.it/2tTnfj1>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Driving Inclusive Growth: See where 20 countries stand in terms of opportunities for investing in technology that enhances inclusive economic growth. [Learn more.](#) *****

UNDERSTANDING KELLY ...

-- **"Kelly's military approach to the media: The new chief of staff respects the press but will defer to his superior, Donald Trump,"** by Hadas Gold: "Should Kelly be presented with a situation in which Trump wishes to ban an outlet from the White House, Kelly would likely carry out the president's directive, [longtime press aide David] Lapan said. 'I think he would push back against banning a reporter from the briefing room, but he also recognizes that ultimately the president is the decision-maker and there is a time to have internal discussions and disagreements,' Lapan said. 'But at the end of the day ... Gen. Kelly is the one to carry out those orders and directions, but he certainly will have a say.'" <http://politi.co/2vi8sC9>

-- **THE NEW BOSS -- "Kelly seizes control of the chaotic West Wing,"** by Andrew Restuccia, Josh Dawsey, Tara Palmeri and Darren Samuelsohn: "John Kelly and Reince Priebus had a joint -- and brief -- meeting with senior staff on Kelly's first day in charge to talk about the changes afoot in the West Wing. By Monday afternoon, Kelly was meeting with staff again, this time without Priebus. Kelly assembled senior aides in his office and laid down his rules of the road: More accountability on how jobs are done. More limitations on access to the Oval Office. More structure. Better briefings and information for the president. A White House staff where everyone reports to Kelly. ... To both Scaramucci's ouster and the new ground rules there was no public dissent ... Internally, people saw Scaramucci's firing as a good thing, several West Wing aides said. ...

"White House officials said Kelly is planning to lock down the Oval Office, restricting the number of aides and outside visitors who can wander in. One aide said Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump and son-in-law Jared Kushner have agreed to follow Kelly's rules when it comes to visiting the Oval and sharing information with the president. 'They are going to actually report to him,' the aide said." <http://politi.co/2tZ8LSK>

WSJ EDITORIAL BOARD -- "Kelly Sends a Message: The new White House chief of staff gives the Mooch the boot": "The big questions about new White House chief of staff John Kelly are whether he can impose discipline on a chaotic staff, and whether President Trump will listen to him. After one day on the job, Mr. Kelly appears to be 2-0." <http://on.wsj.com/2uf2tK2>

THE PRESSURE IS ON -- Yes, John Kelly made a dramatic mark on his first day as chief of staff firing controversial communications director Anthony Scaramucci. He also laid down the law to White House staffers, publicly saying that there would be a new chain of command -- and he was at the top. The question remains whether Kelly can

force order in an inherently chaotic environment. It also remains to be seen whether Kelly can actually stop top aides like Dan Scavino, Steve Bannon and others from going directly to Trump, not to mention Ivanka and Jared when they disagree with their new boss.

BIG QUESTIONS ...

-- WHO WILL BE THE NEXT COMMS DIRECTOR? Trump's White House has struggled to fill the communications director position since the beginning of this administration. Mike Dubke didn't last. Clearly, Scaramucci wasn't a good fit. It's unclear who Kelly will look to fill the critical role of trying to set the message for the administration. Several Republican sources floated **BLAIN RETHMEIER** as a potential replacement. Rethmeier, a veteran Republican communicator who has worked at trade associations and more recently at firms like Ditto PR and Edelman, has a relationship with Kelly. He was part of the sherpa team that helped get Kelly confirmed as DHS secretary. **JASON MILLER** is another communications vet who is perennially brought up to fill the top comms slot. Miller, who served as communications director of Trump's campaign, currently is a CNN contributor and works at Teneo Strategy. Neither Rethmeier nor Miller responded to a request for comment.

-- WHO WILL BE THE NEXT DHS SECRETARY? Republican sources said that the White House's focus is on getting the West Wing in order before turning to fill Kelly's slot at DHS. It's unclear whether Trump will want to continue with a military official in the position, or turn to a more political operator. Either way, multiple sources said Trump's operation wants someone who can be easily confirmed. House Homeland Security Chairman Mike McCaul (R-Texas) is on the shortlist for Kelly replacements. He's got the experience and political chops. Others in the mix include: ICE acting director Thomas Homan and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, though Kobach would likely have a hard time getting confirmed.

-- NOT ON THE SHORT LIST: "'America's toughest sheriff' found guilty of criminal contempt," by Ted Hesson: "A federal judge in Arizona found former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio guilty of criminal contempt on Monday for violating an order in a racial-profiling case. U.S. District Court Judge Susan Bolton said the evidence in the case showed a 'flagrant disregard' for a 2011 court order that required the sheriff to stop detaining people unless they were suspected of a crime. The 85-year-old Arpaio, who lost a reelection bid last year, earned a reputation during his tenure for his tough stance against illegal immigration and headline-grabbing approach to criminal justice, dressing inmates in pink underwear and operating an open-air 'tent city' jail in the scorching Arizona heat." <http://politi.co/2tY307Y>

NOT THE ONION - JAKE TAPPER on CNN.com, "White House officials tricked by email prankster": "A self-described 'email prankster' in the UK fooled a number of White House officials into thinking he was other officials, including an episode where he convinced the White House official tasked with cyber security that he was Jared Kushner and received that official's private email address unsolicited. 'Tom, we are

arranging a bit of a soirée towards the end of August,' the fake Jared Kushner on an Outlook account wrote to the official White House email account of Homeland Security Adviser Tom Bossert. 'It would be great if you could make it, I promise food of at least comparable (sic) quality to that which we ate in Iraq. Should be a great evening.' Bossert wrote back: 'Thanks, Jared. With a promise like that, I can't refuse. Also, if you ever need it, my personal email is' (redacted). ...

"Masquerading as Priebus, the prankster emailed Scaramucci's official account using a mail.com account on Saturday, the day after Priebus' resignation was announced. ... The very real Scaramucci responded: 'You know what you did. We all do. Even today. But rest assured we were prepared. A Man would apologize.' Fake Priebus wrote back: 'I can't believe you are questioning my ethics! The so called "Mooch", who can't even manage his first week in the White House without leaving upset in his wake. I have nothing to apologize for.' Actual Scaramucci responded: 'Read Shakespeare. Particularly Othello. You are right there. My family is fine by the way and will thrive. I know what you did. No more replies from me.'

"In another exchange, Scaramucci was hoodwinked by the same prankster pretending to be Ambassador to Russia-designate Jon Huntsman Jr. ... After a few ... nice messages of support from faux Huntsman, Scaramucci wrote, 'Are you in Moscow now? If not please visit.'" <http://cnn.it/2vcYYZh>

WILD STORY -- "Capitol Police Responded to Wrong Site in Scalise Shooting," by Bloomberg's Billy House: "The U.S. Capitol Police department opened an internal investigation into why its elite tactical team was initially directed to respond to the wrong location when a gunman opened fire last month at a GOP congressional baseball practice, according to two people familiar with the matter. Instead of responding directly to the Virginia field where House Majority Whip Steve Scalise and several others were shot, members of the Capitol Police Containment and Emergency Response Team were signaled instead to go to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's house in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, several miles away." <https://bloom.bg/2uSnJqZ>

RETIREMENT WATCH -- TENNESSEE REPUBLICAN JIMMY DUNCAN is retiring at the end of this Congress. The seat has been represented by a Duncan since 1965: he has been in Congress since 1988, and his father represented the same district before that. The move wasn't wholly unexpected and Republican sources predict several more lawmakers to join Duncan and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) in not seeking reelection.

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Majority of voters believe White House is in chaos," by Steven Shepard: "While President Donald Trump claimed early Monday in a tweet that there was no 'chaos' in his White House, voters disagree: 60 percent say the administration is running somewhat or very chaotically, compared to only 33 percent who say it is running well. That's according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll conducted last Thursday through Saturday. The survey was conducted

entirely prior to Monday's ouster of Anthony Scaramucci from his position as White House communications director, and was already in the field when Reince Priebus left the chief of staff position.

"In general, voters have a low opinion of how Trump's White House is operating. Fewer voters, 29 percent, say Trump's staff serves him well than the 39 percent who say his staff doesn't serve him well. Republican voters have a much more positive impression of how Trump's White House is operating: 63 percent say it is running well, though more than a third, 34 percent, say it is running chaotically. By comparison, very few Democrats (12 percent) or independents (25 percent) say Trump's White House is running well -- with 80 percent of Democrats and 65 percent of independents saying it is beset by chaos." <http://politi.co/2uP9NzO>

NEW ISAAC DOVERE PODCAST -- ISAAC DOVERE spoke to **DEVAL PATRICK** in his Bain Capital office in the John Hancock tower in Boston. "Barack Obama is nudging him to run. His inner circle is actively encouraging it. Dovere chatted with him about Donald Trump's governing by fear and a dishonest pitch to economic nostalgia, while encouraging a rise in casual racism and ditching any real commitment to civil rights. 'I'm trying to think about how to be helpful, because I care about the country, and I'm a patriot first. It's way, way too soon to be making plans for 2020,' he said. 'So I'll just leave it at that.'

"But he's clearly upset with what Trump is doing, on both policy and approach. 'The president, I believe, is at risk of diminishing the voice of the presidency because he pops off so often, and so, kind of, carelessly. I think there is a risk both domestically, and internationally for that matter, that we'll begin to tune him out,' he said. David Axelrod has had several conversations with Patrick about running, and eagerly rattles off the early primary map logic. Valerie Jarrett says that a President Patrick is what 'my heart desires.' Obama himself-who is personally close to Patrick, and counts him among the very small group of people whom he thinks has actual political talent-has privately encouraged him to think about it, among others." <http://politi.co/2tZdmVj> ... **Listen to the full podcast** <http://apple.co/2e2dLvm>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST LOOK:** Stevie Wonder, Green Day, The Killers, The Lumineers, and The Chainsmokers will perform at the 2017 Global Citizen Festival Sept. 23 in New York. Pharrell Williams, Big Sean, Andra Day and Alessia Cara will also perform.

-- **GAVIN NEWSOM** has \$16 million in the bank for his race for governor of California. John Chiang has \$8.9 million. Former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has nearly \$4.5 million.

-- **MOOCH EMAILS BILL COHAN - "The Mooch is Dead! Long Live the Mooch!" -- Vanity Fair:** "'Will make it better this week,' Anthony Scaramucci e-mailed me at 2:33 a.m. on Sunday morning. Alas, he would not get the chance. ... He was out of control

and knew it. His wild interview with Ryan Lizza of The New Yorker probably sealed his fate. He wrote in an e-mail on Saturday morning at 2:24 a.m. that it was 'a mistake' to talk to Lizza. 'I lost my temper,' he said." <http://bit.ly/2tZeTKP>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump presents the Medal of Honor to former Army Specialist James McCloughan of South Haven, Michigan, during an East Room ceremony at the White House on July 31. McCloughan was awarded with the medal for his heroic acts as a combat medic during the Vietnam War. | Win McNamee/Getty Images

FIRST PERSON -- SEN. JEFF FLAKE (R-Ariz.) in POLITICO Magazine, "My Party Is in Denial About Donald Trump: We created him, and now we're rationalizing him. When will it stop?" in an excerpt of his new book "Conscience of a Conservative": "I've been sympathetic to [an] impulse to denial, as one doesn't ever want to believe that the government of the United States has been made dysfunctional at the highest levels, especially by the actions of one's own party. ... [A]s I layered in my defense mechanisms, I even found myself saying things like, 'If I took the time to respond to every presidential tweet, there would be little time for anything else.'

"Given the volume and velocity of tweets from both the Trump campaign and then the White House, this was certainly true. But it was also a monumental dodge. It would be like Noah saying, 'If I spent all my time obsessing about the coming flood, there would be little time for anything else.' At a certain point, if one is being honest, the flood becomes the thing that is most worthy of attention. At a certain point, it might be time to build an ark." <http://politi.co/2uSnrAp> ... **\$20.79 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2uQ6eJy>

MOOCH TICK TOCK -- "Scaramucci's short, wild ride through Trump's White House," by Josh Dawsey, Annie Karni and Tara Palmeri: "The retired Marine general was amazed Scaramucci hadn't been disciplined for his profane rants about other West Wing aides published in The New Yorker and couldn't imagine him staying in the West Wing, several White House officials said. Scaramucci was spotted at the swearing-in ceremony, looking grim-but at that point still unaware of what was coming, said people familiar with how the day unfolded. Scaramucci arrived at work Monday, Kelly's first day, with a plan to announce changes in the communications team ... Instead, Kelly told him he needed to go, meeting with Scaramucci in his West Wing office without President Donald Trump present. 'No way could he work with Kelly,' one White House official said. 'His antics over the past week were crazy by any standard.' ...

"In meetings, Scaramucci repeatedly reminded aides that he wasn't 'one of them,' one White House official said. He often talked about his close personal relationship with the president and the autonomy and leeway he had to make decisions, this official said.

In the few meetings he held with communications staffers, he mostly just talked about his desire to cut off embarrassing 'leaks' of anonymous quotes from inside the West Wing - and to fire anyone who had been talking to the press, according to one person familiar with the meetings. He would cut off former RNC staffers, telling them, 'I know you've been serving two masters in this place' - meaning the president and Priebus, whom Scaramucci believed had been undermining the administration. 'I really believe he was on track to fire everybody,' said the person familiar with the meetings. 'Sarah would try and keep the meeting on track, and he would interrupt to talk about leaks and firing everybody.'" <http://politi.co/2vde29k>

OOPS -- "Anthony Scaramucci erroneously listed as dead in the new Harvard Law alumni directory," by WaPo's Emily Heil: "Pity poor Anthony Scaramucci: reportedly getting divorced, sacked from his job after a mere 10 days - and now there's an erroneous report that he's dead. The blink-and-you-missed-him former White House communications director is listed as deceased in the new Harvard Law School alumni directory, which arrived in alums' mailboxes the very week that 'The Mooch' became the most talked-about guy in politics. An asterisk by the 1989 graduate's name indicates that he was reported dead since the last directory, which was published in 2011. It's unclear whether he was the victim of a prank - or just a typo." <http://wapo.st/2ufnLXT>

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S SENIOR ADVISER -- "Kushner to Interns: Trump Team Too Disorganized to Collude With Russia," by Foreign Policy's Jenna McLaughlin: "Donald Trump's election team could not have colluded with Russia because they were barely talking to each other, according to Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and top White House advisor. 'They thought we colluded, but we couldn't even collude with our local offices,' Kushner told congressional interns during a private talk at the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington on Monday afternoon. ... Before the lecture, the intern director warned those present not to leak the contents of the speech, which was given off the record. ... 'I'm a lot more comfortable talking to you guys today 'cause there isn't any press,' Kushner said." <http://atfp.co/2tYRVU4>

PIC DU JOUR -- @HotlineJosh: "Just passed Seb Gorka on the Hill. His license plate is 'ART WAR'". <http://bit.ly/2tTbIWl>

WHAT THE PENTAGON IS READING -- "Pentagon Offers Plan to Arm Ukraine," by WSJ's Julian E. Barnes in London, Laurence Norman in Brussels and Felicia Schwartz in Washington: "The U.S. Pentagon and State Department have devised plans to supply Ukraine with antitank missiles and other weaponry and are seeking White House approval, U.S. officials said, as Kiev battles Russia-backed separatists and ties between Moscow and Washington fray. ... The official said President Donald Trump hasn't been briefed on the plan and his position isn't known. Some U.S. and Ukrainian officials said they expect it could be months before the White House makes a final determination." <http://on.wsj.com/2uPLzVS>

MONEY WATCH -- "Super PACs already racing toward 2018 - and 2020 -- Conservatives have edge over liberals as both camps raise millions," by Center for

Public Integrity's Ashley Balcerzak and Dave Levinthal: <http://bit.ly/2vi7KEQ>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Watchdog wants investigation into Wasserman Schultz over IT staffer," by Heather Caygle: "A right-leaning ethics group is pushing for a congressional probe into Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz because she continued to employ an IT staffer for months after he became the focus of a criminal investigation. The Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust ... a conservative accountability group, is requesting the Office of Congressional Ethics launch an investigation into what the nonprofit says is Wasserman Schultz's 'apparent breach' of House rules for continuing to employ Imran Awan, even after he was blocked from accessing the House IT system earlier this year." <http://politi.co/2f1YRt5>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Growing disparities in income and more are among today's greatest socio-economic challenges. Private sector capital can help create prosperous communities and reduce inequality globally. Morgan Stanley, with The Economic Intelligence Unit, created a tool to rank 20 countries in terms of finance, healthcare, education and gender disparities. [Read more.](#) *****

ARE YOU INVITED? -- CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING NETWORK'S JENNIFER WISHON: "Bible Studies at the White House: Who's Inside This Spiritual Awakening?": "A spiritual awakening is underway at the White House. Some of the most powerful people in America have been gathering weekly to learn more about God's Word, and this Trump Cabinet Bible study is making history. They've been called the most evangelical Cabinet in history - men and women who don't mince words when it comes to where they stand on God and the Bible. ... Health Secretary Tom Price, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Agriculture Secretary [Sonny] Perdue, and CIA Director Mike Pompeo are just a few of the regulars. ... America's top cop, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, also attends the study." <http://bit.ly/2uPYt6o>

WHAT TO EXPECT IN MOSCOW -- "After Russia's Retaliation, Embassy Workers Brace for a 'Shock to the System,'" by NYT's Neil MacFarquhar: "The last time the Kremlin forced a sweeping reduction of local staff at the American Embassy in Moscow, a young diplomat named Steven Pifer found himself working four days a week on arms control, as usual. But on the fifth day, he navigated the capital in a big truck to move furniture or haul mammoth grocery loads. The entire staff of the embassy, except the ambassador, was assigned one day each week to grunt work called All Purpose Duty ... when they shed their dark suits and polished loafers to mow the lawns, fix the plumbing, cook in the cafeteria and even clean the toilets. ... [M]any current and former diplomats expect a similar effort in the wake of President Vladimir V. Putin's announcement on Sunday that the United States diplomatic mission in Russia must shed 755 employees by Sept. 1." <http://nyti.ms/2tZ6YgD>

-- REUTERS/MOSCOW: "U.S. embassy in Moscow says locked out of diplomatic property": "The U.S. embassy in Moscow accused Russian authorities on Monday of barring diplomatic staff from a property on the outskirts of Moscow, after having earlier

agreed to grant access until midday on Tuesday for them to retrieve belongings. A Russian foreign ministry official, quoted by state news agency RIA, said the U.S. embassy had sent in its trucks without first obtaining permits which, the official said, are required by law because the property is in a conservation area. The property, in a picturesque spot on a bend in the Moskva river northwest of the capital, is leased by the U.S. embassy for its staff to use for recreation." <http://reut.rs/2tZ1thU>

WHAT YOUSEF IS SAYING BEHIND THE SCENES -- "Persian Gulf Rivals

Competed to Host Taliban, Leaked Emails Show," by NYT's David D. Kirkpatrick: "In their long-running rivalry, the United Arab Emirates has often accused its neighbor Qatar of abetting Islamist militants, citing as one prime example the 2013 opening of a Taliban embassy in the Qatari capital, Doha. Now it turns out that the Emiratis tried to get the Taliban to open an embassy in their own country instead. The Emirati ambassador to Washington, Yousef al-Otaiba, even received 'an angry phone call' from the foreign minister at the time complaining that the Taliban had ended up in Qatar and not the U.A.E., according to leaked emails from the ambassador's account."

<http://nyti.ms/2ueRS1P>

BUSINESS BURST - "While Other U.S. Companies Flee China, Starbucks Marches

In," by NYT's Andrew Ross Sorkin: "Consider this mind-boggling statistic that I culled from the company's statement last week about its Chinese ambitions: Starbucks is opening more than 500 stores a year there -- which amounts to more than one new store a day. Starbucks is creating some 10,000 jobs in China annually. In Shanghai alone, there are already 600 stores. To put that in perspective, New York City has about half as many stores as Shanghai." <http://nyti.ms/2uSI1R1>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Corey Lewandowski Has Been Fired From The One America

News Network," by The Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay and Asawin Suebsaeng: "Three sources with knowledge of the situation tell The Daily Beast that the former Trump campaign manager and current informal adviser to the president has been let go from One America News Network, a pro-Trump cable channel pitching itself as an aspiring Fox News. Lewandowski angered OANN leadership with his frequent appearances on Fox and other competitors, which one former OANN employee described as 'a big no-no' with the channel's leadership." <http://thebea.st/2vdlSiX>

POINT ON THE BOARD FOR CBS -- "Mercedes drops contractor in wake of CBS News investigation"

<http://cbsn.ws/2uTRrMa>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) yesterday at lunch at On Rye.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Americans for Prosperity yesterday hosted a forum at the Newseum entitled "Unrig the Economy" featuring Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin

and White House director of legislative affairs Marc Short to discuss the Administration's tax reform plans. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2vnK7f1> **SPOTTED:** Tim Phillips, Shannon McGahn, Jason Chung, Erik Telford, Suhail Khan and Heidi Neal.

TRANSITIONS -- Walmart hired **Christian Gomez, Jr.** as senior manager for global government affairs, with a focus on Latin America. He was previously economic growth adviser at USAID and is a Council of the Americas alum. ... **Jay Shambaugh**, a GWU professor and former Obama White House CEA member, has been named director of the Hamilton Project at Brookings. ...

-- **Natasha Hickman**, a longtime staffer to Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), has been promoted from legislative director to chief of staff in Burr's personal office. She started her Senate career with former Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) and also served in the Bush administration. **Christopher Toppings**, deputy legislative director, has been promoted to legislative director for Burr.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: CSIS' **Andrew Schwartz**, who co-hosts the new podcast "About the News," with Bob Schieffer, is 49. He's celebrating "on the beach in Tel Aviv with my wife Amy Goldberg and our friends Yani and Eva Xanthos who flew in from Athens." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2uQfvkM>

BIRTHDAYS: Dallas investor and Democratic fundraiser Cappy McGarr, executive producer of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor and a creator of the award -- read a McClatchy profile of him <http://bit.ly/2ac3RDv> (hat tip: Robert) ... Ed Gillespie is 56 ... Dan Shapiro, former ambassador to Israel now at Israeli think tank INSS ... Politico's Azi Paybarah and Chris Buddie ... David Helfenbein, senior adviser at strategic branding firm Main & Rose and a Clinton State alum, is 31 (h/t fiancé Leigh Shirvan of @hungryobsession) ... Drew Littman, former Franken chief of staff and former senior counselor at HHS, now policy director at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck (h/t Jon Haber) ... former Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC) is 76 ... former Rep. Rick Boucher (D-Va.) is 71 ... Mikayla Marie Hall ... Josh Davenport ...

... **Travis Burk**, of CRC Public Relations and alum of Bush '04 and Rick Scott, is 37 (h/t wife Ginger Gibson) ... Joanna Knight, director of speechwriting at EMILY's List and Maisie's mom (h/ts Alexandra De Luca and John Weber) ... Corrie MacLaggan, managing editor of the Texas Tribune @corriemac (h/t Oliver Bernstein) ... David Cygielman is 36 ... Hillel International's Sheila Katz ... Avi Arad is 69 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Jeffrey Bush ... Ellen Brown ... former Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) is 8-0 ... Zachary Isaac Gold is 28 ... Adam W. G. Alles ... Chris Mayer ... Andrea Jones, McCain and ABC comms alum ... Karen Marangi ... Josie McSpadden (Duckett), senior comms officer at the Gates Foundation ... Benji Englander ... Rosanna Arlia ... Guy Short ... Andrew Gallo ... Ari Zoldan ... Mary Angela Moutoussis ... Scott Evertz ... Tom Dougherty is 6-0 ... Chris Steeples ... Larry Harrington ... Martin Hamburger is 54 ... Chris Hayler (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** The Morgan Stanley Institute for Sustainable

Investing, with The Economist Intelligence Unit, created the Inclusive Growth Opportunities Index to explore technology investments that can increase access to finance, healthcare and education, and enhance gender inclusion. The report and interactive tool, which allows users to rank 20 emerging and developed countries, highlights the potential for investment opportunities that drive inclusive economic growth. See which countries indexed high on the list, and where there are opportunities to invest in inclusive growth. [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

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Sent: Tue 8/15/2017 8:35:59 PM
Subject: Daily WH Report
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John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

To: AO OPA Individual News Clips[AO_OPA_Ind_News_Clips@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Fri 3/9/2018 7:51:23 PM
Subject: E&E Greenwire: GOP media firm hired for Pruitt's 'year in review' report, 3/9/18

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060075945/search?keyword=EPA>

GOP media firm hired for Pruitt's 'year in review' report

By Kevin Bogardus and Mike Soraghan, 3/9/18

U.S. EPA hired Republican campaign consultants to help produce a report touting Administrator Scott Pruitt's accomplishments.

Go BIG Media Inc. signed a contract with the federal agency last month worth up to \$6,500, according to federal records. Under the contract, the firm was to help with "design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report."

It was Go BIG Media's first federal government contract.

On Monday, EPA released the "Year In Review" report, which highlighted Pruitt's actions in "2017-2018." It emphasized the EPA chief's moves to roll back several major regulations, which have won praise from industry but frustrated environmental groups (E&E News PM, March 5).

The report has several statistics on Pruitt's work, including 22 deregulatory actions that the agency argues will lead to more than \$1 billion in cost savings. It also includes several pages of "Media Highlights" — excerpts of news interviews and articles, including the EPA chief's No. 5 spot on GQ's "50 Most Powerful People in Trump's Washington." And it includes quotes from newsmakers praising Pruitt and the agency under "WHAT THEY'RE SAYING."

In its 37 pages, the report mentions Pruitt more than 200 times.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said that Go BIG Media was the cheaper vendor to help with the EPA report but that in the end, the document was completed within the agency.

"We had two options: One vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house," Wilcox said.

The EPA spokesman compared the agency's use of a contractor for Pruitt's report to the "What's Upstream" effort, a billboard advertising campaign funded with EPA grant money under the Obama administration that targeted farmers and sparked a Republican backlash.

In a report released last April, the EPA inspector general cleared the agency of violating any lobbying prohibitions with the campaign run by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and its public relations firm, Strategies 360. One of the firm's co-founders, Ron Dotzauer, has run Democratic political campaigns.

"This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager's PR firm to run EPA's What's Upstream campaign," Wilcox said.

Pruitt, formerly Oklahoma's attorney general before coming to EPA, is thought to have political ambitions outside the agency. Observers expect the EPA chief will run again for a statewide office back home once he leaves the federal government.

Go BIG Media was founded in 2015 by veteran GOP operative Phillip Stutts, who has worked on presidential and congressional campaigns.

He served as a political appointee at the Department of Education during the George W. Bush administration. Stutts also has ties to the Trump administration, helping with the contentious nomination of Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

His website says he's worked on campaigns with "billions of dollars in political ad spend" and contributed to "over 1,000 election victories, including hundreds of US House campaigns, dozens of US Senate campaigns and even three Presidential victories."

The site also says he is "one of the masterminds behind the curtain of political marketing," having been lauded as a "marketing genius" by Fox Business and "the political guru" by ESPN. Stutts also sings the virtues of using campaign-style tactics — including "going negative" — in other fields, such as business and nonprofit groups.

He is a frequent guest commentator on cable news shows and is currently promoting a new book — "Fire Them Now" — warning of "lies" told by digital marketers.

Go BIG Media profiles its campaign work on its website, including advertisements on behalf of GOP political groups like the Senate Leadership Fund and the National Republican Senatorial Committee attacking Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) and bolstering GOP candidates like former Sen. Luther Strange in Alabama and Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush.

Federal Election Commission records show that in the 2018 election cycle, the firm has been paid for services such as "online advertising" and "media consulting" by more than a dozen Republican campaigns.

Contracting records show that funds for EPA's contract with Go BIG Media haven't been obligated. But Elliot Fuchs, financial controller for Go BIG Media, told E&E News that his firm was paid \$6,500 by EPA for its work, identified as the agreement's "ceiling" in the records. He said Peter Graves was the firm's lead employee on the EPA project and would know more about what the job entailed.

Graves joined the firm last year as its president of political and media strategies. He worked at the Republican National Committee during the last two election cycles and has also been political director and executive director of the Washington State Republican Party.

His Twitter account quips that he is "occasionally a propagandist."

Neither Stutts nor Graves returned messages from E&E News asking for comment for this story.

Contracting records indicate and Fuchs confirmed that the agreement with EPA was Go BIG Media's first federal government contract.

Go BIG Media's performance period for its contract with EPA ran from Feb. 2 to Feb. 9, the records show. The administrator's office provided the agreement's funding.

The contract was competed under simplified acquisition procedures, or SAP, which are used by agencies to move quickly to make smaller purchases. There were two offers received for the contract.

Wilcox didn't name the other vendor that made the pricier bid for the contract.

EPA has contracted with another Republican consulting firm during Pruitt's tenure at the agency.

Definers Corp., a Republican-run public affairs firm, signed a \$120,000 contract with EPA in December last year to provide media clipping services. But soon after the firm signed the agreement, it attracted scrutiny from Democrats and environmental groups.

The contract ended up being canceled, and Definers decided to no longer do business with the federal government (Greenwire, Dec. 19, 2017).

Asked whether he worried about a similar backlash, Fuchs with Go BIG Media said he was not.

"No," Fuchs said. "The work's done, and we got paid pretty quickly."

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Morris, Madeline[morris.madeline@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 8/15/2017 8:33:55 PM
Subject: EPA Evening News Highlights 8.15.17
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EPA Evening News Highlights 8.15.17

E&E News: Pruitt slams ‘false narrative’ on climate report

U.S. EPA boss Scott Pruitt is downplaying the importance of a climate report that has sparked concerns that the Trump administration will ignore global warming data that don't fit with its political agenda. Speaking to an Iowa TV news program Sunday, Pruitt criticized what he called a "false narrative" surrounding scientists' fears that Pruitt and President Trump might dismiss the findings from 13 federal agencies that climate change is already clearly affecting the United States.

NTK Network: Here Is Why Keith Ellison’s Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Democratic National Committee vice chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) is holding a community forum to save the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Minnesota on Tuesday. It's a curious move, given that the EPA has received bipartisan praise for its work in Minnesota under the leadership of Administrator Scott Pruitt. "Come and join Congressman Ellison along with environmental advocates, scientists, and musicians to learn about Trump's plan for the EPA and how we're fighting back in Congress," is how Ellison's Tuesday night forum is billed.

The Daily Caller: Obama EPA Paid \$347K In Incentives To ‘Ineligible’ Employees

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspector general's office improperly paid 11 employees about \$347,000 in "incentives and accrued leave" as part of agency-wide buyouts, according to an audit released Monday. "These 11 buyouts occurred because the OIG's Office of the Chief of Staff had weak controls for verifying that staff who were offered and accepted buyouts occupied positions" not approved by federal officials, an inspector general audit found. Investigators also found that "OIG management did not sufficiently oversee the actions of

personnel in the Office of the Chief of Staff” managing the buyouts offered from 2013 to 2014. The EPA had to reduce its staff as part of budget “sequestration.”

Fox News Opinion: Climate policy -- get ready for the next round of hype

Preparations are well underway in the liberal media to make August 18 a milestone in the history of climate policy. That is the date when a special U.S. government report on the state of climate science by authors from 13 federal agencies, known as the U.S. Global Change Research Program, is due to be released. But if August 18 does become a day to be remembered, it will be as a much-hyped political event, not a scientific one. The substance of the USGCRP report apparently only rehashes, at great length, research that was assessed even more exhaustively in the Fifth Assessment Report or FAR, published in 2013 by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Natural Gas Intel: EPA's Pruitt Denies White House Will Suppress Climate Change Report

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt said the agency would evaluate a report on climate change, and derided the Obama administration for its apologetic stance on the issue and on the politicization of science in general. In an interview last week with Fort Worth, TX-based WBAP-AM, Pruitt said the agency would complete its review of a draft version of a report on climate change, part of the National Climate Assessment (NCA), by a Friday deadline to do so. But he categorically denied a report by the New York Times that the Trump administration plans to suppress the report.

The Washington Examiner: New Trump executive order will hasten oil and gas pipeline permits: Industry officials

President Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday afternoon that the oil and gas industry sees as essential to speeding up pipeline reviews and permitting, in addition to other energy infrastructure projects, according to senior representatives of the oil and gas industry in unions. "We also look forward to President Trump as he signs an executive order aimed at streamlining the permitting process for infrastructure projects," said Jack Gerard, the president and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute. "There is over a trillion dollars that is expected to be invested just in building energy infrastructure that's separate and apart from building highways, bridges, etc."

National Evening News Highlights 8.15.17

The Hill: GOP stands by Trump after Charlottesville

Republicans in Washington are largely standing by President Trump despite discomfort with his response to the violent and deadly clashes in Charlottesville, Va. Although they are openly questioning why it took Trump 48 hours to forcefully denounce the KKK members, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who turned a quiet, peaceful college town into a deadly war zone, they say they don't think the president is a racist and that they are ready to work with him on policy.

Bloomberg View: Democrats Fret as Clinton Book Rollout Looms

Democrats, reveling in President Donald Trump's plummeting popularity and the Republican Party's civil wars, are looking forward to September. Except for one thing: the rollout of Hillary Clinton's next book right after Labor Day. Clinton has promised to "let my guard down" in the book, "What Happened," explaining her shocking loss to Trump in November. She has already offered up several explanations, blaming Russian interference, former FBI director James Comey, and misogyny, while also acknowledging tactical errors by her campaign.

Washington Free Beacon: Al Qaeda Publishes Blueprint for Attacks on Key U.S. Transportation Systems

The al Qaeda terror group's chief bomb maker has published a blueprint for new attacks on U.S. transportation systems, including planes, trains, and boats, which the terror group views as "prime targets," according to a copy of a lengthy manifesto that provides a guide for would-be terrorists to launch attacks. Ibrahim al-Asiri, a top al Qaeda leader known as the terror group's chief bomb maker, detailed the extremist organization's plans to target U.S. passenger and shipping transportation services, which the terror organization views as weak links ripe for attack.

TRUMP TWEETS

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/15/stories/1060058771>

Pruitt slams 'false narrative' on climate report

By Niina Heikkinen, 8/15/17

U.S. EPA boss Scott Pruitt is downplaying the importance of a climate report that has sparked concerns that the Trump administration will ignore global warming data that don't fit with its political agenda.

Speaking to an Iowa TV news program Sunday, Pruitt criticized what he called a "false narrative" surrounding scientists' fears that Pruitt and President Trump might dismiss the findings from 13 federal agencies that climate change is already clearly affecting the United States.

"The report doesn't impact the process," Pruitt told KCCI News in Des Moines. "It doesn't impact the responsibilities that we are taking already with respect to CO2. And so I think some of those are simply legend and false narrative that people try to put on the marketplace."

The draft section of the National Climate Assessment has attracted national attention since it was reported on by The New York Times last week.

The report contradicts Pruitt and others in the Trump administration who argue that the causes of climate change are difficult to pin down precisely. It states that humans are already having a clear impact on the climate, from more heat waves to fewer cold days (Climatewire, Aug. 9).

Last week, Pruitt told a conservative Dallas radio show on WBAP that EPA and the other 12 agencies would be reviewing the draft report's methodology. He said that the report ought to be subjected to objective peer review and that science should not be "thrown around to dictate policy in Washington, D.C." (Greenwire, Aug. 11).

Discussing the report on Sunday, Pruitt touted U.S. efforts to cut carbon dioxide emissions, pointing to technological innovations and EPA partnerships with industry.

The United States does not "have anything to be apologetic about" when it comes to controlling CO2 emissions, he said.

As he has in previous media appearances, Pruitt credited advances in hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling for reducing CO2 emissions domestically.

"If we really care about our environment and CO2 reduction, then we ought to produce more here, because we do it better than India, we do it better than China, and people who have traveled to those places know that. They know that from the air that they breathe there," he said.

Pruitt also praised the Clean Air Act for leading to a 65 percent reduction in air pollutants since 1980. He contrasted the U.S. regulatory system to that of Italy, which he called "deficient" compared with the United States because it lacked its own Clean Air Act and did not partner with industry.

"I think we're making tremendous progress as a country and we are going to continue to do that, and as we evaluate this going forward, we are going to continue to ask the question, what authority do we have to regulate greenhouse gases and CO2 under the Clean Air Act?" he said.

Pruitt's comments came as he travels around the country in a "State Action Tour" this summer. He is aiming to visit 25 states by the end of August. Much of the tour's focus has been on the administration's rollback of the controversial Clean Water Rule, but he has also responded to a number of questions from local media about what the administration should be doing about climate change.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/here-is-why-keith-ellis-sons-community-forum-to-save-the-epa-is-pointless/>

Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

By NTK Staff, 8/15/17

Democratic National Committee vice chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) is holding a community forum to save the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Minnesota on Tuesday. It's a curious move, given that the EPA has received bipartisan praise for its work in Minnesota under the leadership of Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Come and join Congressman Ellison along with environmental advocates, scientists, and musicians to learn about Trump's plan for the EPA and how we're fighting back in Congress," is how Ellison's Tuesday night forum is billed.

Ellison's attacks on the EPA, and specifically its work in Minnesota, are strange given that Pruitt has received praise in the state of Minnesota for his support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Additionally, Minnesota's Democratic Governor Mark Dayton has praised Pruitt for working to eliminate the federal government's red tape.

"Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies," Minnesota Public Radio wrote in July.

During a visit to Minnesota in July, Pruitt "affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative."

According to The Star Tribune, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative "provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior."

The Star Tribune's editorial board, which is a traditionally liberal-leaning paper, praised Pruitt for his support for the Great Lakes restoration project.

“Last month, Governor Dayton praised EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to eliminate federal bureaucracy to state agencies, and The Star Tribune applauded Pruitt’s efforts to protect the Great Lakes. Administrator Pruitt is committed to protecting Minnesota’s environment and provide Americans with regulatory certainty,” an EPA spokesman said in a statement.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/15/obama-epa-paid-347k-in-incentives-to-ineligible-employees/>

Obama EPA Paid \$347K In Incentives To ‘Ineligible’ Employees

By Michael Bastasch, 8/15/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspector general’s office improperly paid 11 employees about \$347,000 in “incentives and accrued leave” as part of agency-wide buyouts, according to an audit released Monday.

“These 11 buyouts occurred because the OIG’s Office of the Chief of Staff had weak controls for verifying that staff who were offered and accepted buyouts occupied positions” not approved by federal officials, an inspector general audit found.

Investigators also found that “OIG management did not sufficiently oversee the actions of personnel in the Office of the Chief of Staff” managing the buyouts offered from 2013 to 2014. The EPA had to reduce its staff as part of budget “sequestration.”

That year, Republicans and then-President Barack Obama couldn’t agree on a budget, so automatic cuts to federal agencies took effect.

The Obama administration gave the EPA approval to offer employees \$25,000 to retire, and 23

inspector general's office employees took the incentives when offered. In total, the IG's office handed out \$859,000 worth of retirement and leave incentives.

However, nearly half the IG officials who took buyouts weren't eligible to receive them, according to investigators. These employees "did not occupy positions matching the organizational unit, geographic location, occupational series, grade level and other factors," the Office of Personnel Management approved.

"The misapplication of buyout authority resulted in the OIG paying approximately \$347,000 in incentives and accrued leave for OIG employees in positions that were not in the OPM-approved buyout plan," investigators found.

On top of that, the inspector general's office did not eliminate the positions being held by the 23 employees who got buyouts. The office "potentially hired five new staff into positions that should have been abolished," the audit found.

"A Criminal Investigator and an Auditor were hired into positions with the same job series, grade, full performance level and location as staff who had accepted a buyout," the report read. "In addition, the Office of Investigations hired three other Criminal Investigators into vacated positions that should have been abolished but were instead restructured."

Fox News Opinion

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/08/15/climate-policy-get-ready-for-next-round-hype.htm.html>

Climate policy—get ready for the next round of hype

By W. David Montgomery, 8/15/17

Preparations are well underway in the liberal media to make August 18 a milestone in the history of climate policy. That is the date when a special U.S. government report on the state of climate

science by authors from 13 federal agencies, known as the U.S. Global Change Research Program, is due to be released.

But if August 18 does become a day to be remembered, it will be as a much-hyped political event, not a scientific one. The substance of the USGCRP report apparently only rehashes, at great length, research that was assessed even more exhaustively in the Fifth Assessment Report or FAR, published in 2013 by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The report's claim of progress is supported by lists of advances in climate science since 2013, but the major conclusions of the report are no different from the FAR and are based on the same materials. Over and over, the report states that support for its conclusions comes from the FAR.

What is different is that the well-known research findings--well known to experts, anyway-- are summarized in the USGCRP document in a way that makes them appear newer, stronger and more alarmist than they really are.

The New York Times stoked the hype by claiming on August 7 that it had unearthed the report from where it was being hidden by Trump Administration doubters, when in truth drafts of the report were readily available and posted for public comment.

Then the Times became excited about how the report would finally force the administration to admit the reality of climate change. The Times even embedded a video of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in one article, with the heading "A draft report by scientists from 13 federal agencies directly contradicts statements by Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, that human contribution to climate change is uncertain." But the USGCRP report itself recognizes and describes the uncertainty of climate science, which all involved except the Times editors understand.

The headline and editorial writers are having a wonderful time inventing claims about how novel and definitive the report will be. They are aided and abetted by selective summarizing of key sections of the report.

For example: "Attribution" is the term applied to efforts to determine how much of the observed

increase in global average temperature since 1950 is caused by human activity, principally carbon dioxide emissions and land use change.

The upcoming report claims there has been substantial progress in attribution research since the IPCC covered this topic extensively in 2013. At that time, the IPCC declined to give a single number for the share attributable to human activity. The definitive statement of the IPCC was that more than half of observed warming was attributable to human activity.

In contrast, the USGCRP report claims that human activity was responsible for 100 percent of observed warming.

This major rewording comes despite the fact that the USGCRP report relies exclusively on the FAR for its calculations of the human share of warming. Nor does the report cite new evidence that would justify its shock-value conclusion.

The new summary judgments are made subjectively by the authors of the report, who are all government employees working on climate research or academics supported by government climate funding. I question why these authors chose to make the scarier statement when they could have relied on the IPCC report to settle the attribution question.

This pattern is repeated through the major findings. Summary statements are phrased to give the impression of greater certainty and larger impacts than either the text of the report or the earlier FAR support.

For example, the report highlights a statement about decreases in surface soil moisture in the United States but leaves for the reader to unearth the statement that “Little evidence is found for a human influence on observed precipitation deficits.”

In other words, the report admits that there is low confidence in attribution of drought on a global scale to human influence on climate.

As another example, the report discusses how changes in the El Nino weather phenomenon and in ocean currents have contributed to recent extreme weather events. But then the USGCRP report admits that there is little evidence of human influence on past changes in either El Nino or ocean currents.

The discussion of projected impacts of warming is wide open to selective quotation because it frequently starts with a broad statement of a tendency and then admits that it is impossible to say how large the effect will be. For example, the statement that sea level rise will increase flooding due to coastal storms is later qualified by the statement that there is “low confidence in the magnitude” of the increase in flood risk.

Likewise, the upcoming report highlights a statement that extreme temperatures in the U.S. are likely to increase “even more” than average temperatures, but a description of the beneficial effect of fewer severely cold days and fewer cold waves is left hidden in the text.

The agencies’ report also gives emphasis to the possibility of unanticipated and impossible-to-manage changes in the climate system in the next century. This is a topic likely to attract editorial attention, but a closer reading of the text reveals that highlighted risk is only speculation about a physical possibility.

In its discussion of specific examples, such as a catastrophic change in ocean circulation patterns, the report emphasizes predicted risks that the FAR concluded were minimal through the rest of the century.

Given the uproar over President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, statements in the report about that topic are also likely to be widely quoted. Here the report is subtle in how it summarizes findings about the importance of that agreement.

It states that “successful implementation of the first round of Nationally Determined Contributions associated with the Paris Agreement will provide some likelihood of meeting the long-term temperature goal [of] 2oC.”

That could suggest to a reader that the Paris Agreement was well on its way to achieving the goal, but the study cited in the report concludes that the Paris Agreement only increases the probability of achieving the target from zero to eight percent.

In other words, the odds of global temperature increases staying below 2oC remain at 12 to 1 against, even with the Paris Agreement.

The report raises the stakes for the Paris Agreement by describing the 2oC goal as “what scientists have referred to as the guardrail beyond which changes become catastrophic.”

Nothing in the USGCRP report or the FAR supports calling 2oC a guarantee of no harmful effects or a trigger that ensures catastrophe if it is exceeded. Moreover, the very study cited in the discussion of the Paris Agreement found that there was no scenario for the Paris Agreement that gave better than a 50-50 chance of staying below 2oC.

One claim in the USGCRP report is not about climate but about research activities, and it is quite understandable. It is that there have been major advances in climate science since 2013. The USGCRP is a target in the 2018 budget, and reporting recent achievements sends the message that cutting the USGCRP budget will shut off the progress.

There has been considerable interesting work on climate change in the past four years, but the progress of climate science has been fitful. FAR revealed, for example, that on the most important indicator of uncertainty in climate science--the likely range of warming for a given increase in carbon dioxide emissions--progress was actually retrograde.

Indeed, the FAR widened the likely range of temperature increase for a doubling of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from the previous assessment, indicating greater uncertainty, not less, about this issue.

In summary, there is little new about climate science in the report, and nothing at all new about attribution of past warming and extreme weather events to human activity, projections of future

warming and its effects, or potential for catastrophic changes.

Thus as far as the science goes, there is little to advance the case of any side in the debate over climate policy. That makes the publication of the report more a hook for stories that one side or another wants to tell than an actual item of news in itself.

Despite its claims to make no policy recommendations, the USGCRP report does its best to make the Paris climate agreement appear more important than it is.

There is also evidence of selective summarizing, to make statements about possible harmful effects of climate change easy to find and quote while leaving it to the reader to unearth statements about the potentially small magnitude of those effects.

Any quotation from the report, especially of statements that some bad effect will increase without specifics of how much and whether there is human influence, should be checked against the full text.

Or, if there is no time for that, it should be taken with a large dose of salt.

Natural Gas Intel

<http://www.naturalgasintel.com/articles/111405-epas-pruitt-denies-white-house-will-suppress-climate-change-report>

EPA's Pruitt Denies White House Will Suppress Climate Change Report

By Charlie Passut, 8/15/17

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt said the agency would evaluate a report on climate change, and derided the Obama administration for its apologetic

stance on the issue and on the politicization of science in general.

In an interview last week with Fort Worth, TX-based WBAP-AM, Pruitt said the agency would complete its review of a draft version of a report on climate change, part of the National Climate Assessment (NCA), by a Friday deadline to do so. But he categorically denied a report by the New York Times that the Trump administration plans to suppress the report.

"We're going to review it, like all the other 12 agencies [required to review it] and evaluate the merits, demerits and the methodology and accuracy of the report," Pruitt said last Thursday. "[But] frankly, this report ought to be subjected to peer review methodology and evaluation.

"Science should not be politicized. Science is not something that should be thrown about to try to dictate policy in Washington, DC. It ought to be objectively measured, and we ought to be able to inform our citizens about what we know and what we don't know."

Under the Global Change Research Act of 1990, Congress mandated that an NCA is produced every four years. A draft version of the climate assessment was completed in June.

During the interview, Pruitt said the United States had reduced its carbon dioxide (CO₂) footprint to pre-1994 levels through the use of innovation and technology. He cited the use of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas production and the switch to natural gas for power generation as major reasons for lower CO₂ emissions.

"If we really care about reducing CO₂ globally, we need to be exporting what we're doing in this country," Pruitt said. "What's lost in this whole discussion about climate and climate change [is that] warming happens. So do cooling trends.

"The climate changes always. Do we contribute to it? Yes. To what degree? Measuring that with precision is very challenging. But the big question is this: What is the process, and what do we do in response? We're already leading the world in the reduction of greenhouse gases [and] CO₂. We need to be exporting what we're doing, not being apologetic about it here in this country."

He added that the Trump administration's decision this summer to withdraw from the 2015 global climate agreement signed in Paris in 2015 was "without question" the right decision.

"That was the Obama administration going to Paris and being apologetic, and not recognizing the very things that we've done as a country," Pruitt said. "The Paris accord was a bad business deal for this country, and represented an apologetic view of the progress we've already made as a country in leading these CO2 reductions."

When asked why his critics continue to have a preoccupation with CO2, Pruitt responded that such criticism "serves political ends."

"Frankly, [for] the last several years the past administration used the CO2 issue as a wedge issue. That's why we talk about it as much. Why aren't we celebrating what we're achieving with respect to CO2?"

Pruitt added that while he believes "there are a lot of good, hard-working folks" at the EPA, the agency "lost their mission" during the Obama years.

"There are many examples where the agency just hasn't done its core mission, and most importantly to me is that they haven't worked with their partners," he said. "One of the things that I've been focusing on is restoring that trust."

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/new-trump-executive-order-will-hasten-oil-and-gas-pipeline-permits-industry-officials/article/2631611>

New Trump executive order will hasten oil and gas pipeline permits: Industry officials

By John Siciliano, 8/15/17

President Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday afternoon that the oil and gas industry sees as essential to speeding up pipeline reviews and permitting, in addition to other energy infrastructure projects, according to senior representatives of the oil and gas industry in unions.

"We also look forward to President Trump as he signs an executive order aimed at streamlining the permitting process for infrastructure projects," said Jack Gerard, the president and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute. "There is over a trillion dollars that is expected to be invested just in building energy infrastructure that's separate and apart from building highways, bridges, etc."

Gerard previewed the president's action while discussing a new report that showed the enormous benefit from pipeline development to jobs creation and the economy.

Moving "permits in a timely fashion" will only increase the benefits of opening up private investment in the nation's pipeline infrastructure, he said. Gerard said the oil and natural gas industry employs close to 10.3 million Americans in the U.S., and "it's critical that we have this infrastructure ... and pipelines are essential."

The oil and gas industry ships 99.9 percent of all its raw and refined products through pipelines, Gerard said.

"We applaud [the president's] efforts and the efforts on the part of the administration to create jobs and help continue the renaissance" in energy, Gerard told reporters.

Part of the permitting process for projects includes environmental impact reviews that are required under the National Environmental Policy Act. The law requires that all infrastructure projects be reviewed for their impacts on local ecology and the environment. But a lot of time those reviews can be bogged down by a process that requires input from a number of agencies.

The president's order comes after the administration has had several months to review the permitting process and find ways of expediting it, said Sean McGarvey, president of North America's Building Trades Unions, who chairs the oil and gas labor management committee.

"I think they will come out with a good product under this executive order that will protect the environment" while still providing for jobs and the economy, he said. McGarvey said he expects the president's order to better coordinate agencies to ensure the permitting process is not "death of a thousand paper cuts," where projects are scuttled because the bureaucracy is too sprawling and complex.

Gerard said he believes the president's goal is to achieve permits taking no longer than two years. He said the oil industry has faced circumstances when it is waiting for permits for nearly a decade with no way of knowing when they will be approved. "And it makes no sense at all," he added.

Meanwhile, the president of the New Jersey chapter of the environmental group Sierra Club expects the order to also roll back an Obama administration executive order that "required strict building standards for government-funded projects to reduce exposure to increased flooding from sea level rise" due to climate change.

"Obama originally signed this executive order to help protect people and property from climate change and sea level rise," said Jeff Tittel, the director of the New Jersey chapter. "The strict standards in the EO were meant to protect against climate change.

"Getting rid of these standards will put vital infrastructure and buildings at risk. All the taxpayer money could wash out to sea in the next storm. Flooding and inundation are only going to become more dangerous and common, especially in our coastal communities."

The Obama order was put in place in response to Hurricane Sandy that pummeled the East Coast in 2012.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/346605-gop-stands-by-trump-after-charlottesville>

GOP stands by Trump after Charlottesville

By Scott Wong, 8/15/17

Republicans in Washington are largely standing by President Trump despite discomfort with his response to the violent and deadly clashes in Charlottesville, Va.

Although they are openly questioning why it took Trump 48 hours to forcefully denounce the KKK members, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who turned a quiet, peaceful college town into a deadly war zone, they say they don't think the president is a racist and that they are ready to work with him on policy.

"I don't think the president is some sort of closet racist who's deliberately stirring up the devils of our nature," Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), a veteran lawmaker and former member of leadership, told The Hill.

"Because of the nature of the attack, he should have been more specific. Within 48 hours, he was," Cole added. "Probably he missed an opportunity, but we're all singing from the same song book now, and that's a good thing."

Republicans across the political spectrum were quick to denounce the white nationalists who marched on Charlottesville last weekend, one of whom is charged with plowing his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, killing a woman and injuring 19 others. And many Republicans criticized Trump's response blaming "many sides" for the violence as lackluster at best.

Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner, who leads Senate Republicans' 2018 campaign efforts, scolded Trump on Twitter for failing to directly call out the "evil" as "white supremacists" and "domestic terrorism."

At the same time, congressional Republicans didn't ditch Trump in droves as they did last fall after a leaked 2005 "Access Hollywood" tape revealed the then-GOP nominee privately bragging that he can grope women because he's a celebrity.

Days before Election Day, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) held a conference call with rank-and-file members and announced he would no longer defend or campaign with Trump. And he gave his fellow Republicans the green light to cut Trump loose if it would help them win reelection.

There were none of those actions this time, and some Republicans were quick to defend Trump, particularly after he denounced the far-right groups by name on Monday.

The political reaction largely fits a familiar pattern that's recurred throughout Trump's candidacy and first 200 days in office: outrage from liberals, Democrats, "Never Trump" Republicans and a handful of others, while most Republicans try their best to duck and downplay the controversy and pivot back to their stalled GOP agenda.

"I think the left is trying to make this political and it shouldn't be," said one vulnerable House Republican. "I'm disgusted by the heat from both sides."

"I believe his message has been clear that racism, bigotry and hatred is not American and must be rejected in its entirety," added Rep. Tom Reed (R-N.Y.) a Trump ally who said he still backs the president.

Asked if he had any concerns about Trump's initial response, a top aide to a conservative congressman replied: "None."

"Despite whatever faults Trump has, he is not racist or anti-Semitic. ... Trump did not earn this."

The GOP-controlled House Judiciary and Homeland Security committees currently have no

plans to hold hearings into the Charlottesville attack or on why white supremacist groups appear to be on the rise, GOP sources said, though they face pressure to do so from Democrats.

All GOP leaders seem to want to talk about is overhauling the outdated tax code, something they'll need Trump to sign. Ryan has been tweeting nonstop about his party's efforts to enact tax reform this fall.

In the wake of the attack, the Trump administration's actions speak louder than any words the president utters, said Cole, who was serving as Oklahoma secretary of state when domestic terrorists blew up a federal building in the heart of Oklahoma City. Attorney General Jeff Sessions made clear the Justice Department and FBI are investigating whether Saturday's deadly attack can be prosecuted under federal hate crimes and domestic terrorism laws.

"That's pretty swift and stern stuff," Cole said.

To the "Never Trump" crowd of Republicans critical of the president, Charlottesville represents a defining moment for the party.

They fear that a Republican Party that becomes identified too closely with Trump risks permanently alienating a more diverse, less white electorate. Republicans are also losing ground with young people: A recent poll showed that only 22 percent of millennials approve of Trump's job performance, while 62 percent disapproved.

"I think this is life or death for the Republican party. That's not an overstatement," Rick Tyler, the former spokesman to Sen. Ted Cruz's (R-Texas) presidential campaign, said on MSNBC.

"He's not only unfit to be president ... he's unfit to be human," another vocal Trump critic, GOP strategist Ana Navarro, proclaimed on CNN.

One thing to watch will be whether Trump's already dismal approval among voters drops further

in Charlottesville's aftermath. On Monday, Gallup's average of polls showed that only 34 percent of Americans approved of Trump, an all-time low for the president, while 61 percent disapproved, an all-time high.

If his popularity slips further, rank-and-file Republicans may have no choice but to dump Trump and distance themselves from a toxic and volatile president, especially with Democrats fighting to take back power in the House and Senate in 2018.

GOP strategists said the president simply can't afford another drop in the polls.

"Trump's low poll numbers makes everything harder for his administration," said Alex Conant, a former top aide to Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), one of Trump's presidential primary rivals. "With less public support, he'll find that he has even less political capital when Congress returns" to Washington after Labor Day.

Trump's handling of Charlottesville was certainly "not helpful," Conant added, but it's too early to evaluate whether it did any lasting damage to the brand of the Party of Lincoln.

"In the past, voters have treated Trump as an independent political brand, rather than the leader of the GOP," argued Conant, a veteran of the Republican National Committee and the George W. Bush White House. "That's how so many Republican candidates were able to run ahead of him last year."

Bloomberg View

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-08-15/democrats-fret-as-clinton-book-rollout-looms>

Democrats Fret as Clinton Book Rollout Looms

By Albert Hunt, 8/15/17

Democrats, reveling in President Donald Trump's plummeting popularity and the Republican Party's civil wars, are looking forward to September. Except for one thing: the rollout of Hillary Clinton's next book right after Labor Day.

Clinton has promised to "let my guard down" in the book, "What Happened," explaining her shocking loss to Trump in November. She has already offered up several explanations, blaming Russian interference, former FBI director James Comey, and misogyny, while also acknowledging tactical errors by her campaign.

Many Washington Democrats, though unwilling to criticize her in public, wish she'd "move on," as Senator Al Franken has put it. They fear that her complaints help Trump make his case that the controversies surrounding him flow from the Democrats' bitterness about their 2016 loss.

They prefer the approach taken by Al Gore after his equally controversial loss in 2000. Gore didn't really criticize the administration of President George W. Bush for almost two years, even though he, like Clinton, won the popular vote while losing in the Electoral College. (Gore lost when the Supreme Court stopped a vote recount in Florida.) Gore went on to start a new career, winning a Nobel Prize and Academy Award for his work on climate change.

Associates hoped Clinton would also find a way to make a different contribution, perhaps as a university president or foundation head. There have even been suggestions that she move overseas for a couple of years.

Clinton could make a contribution speaking out selectively on important issues, drawing on her wealth of experience.

But she remains haunted by her defeat. The gist of her message next month, based on her public statements and accounts of private conversations from people who've talked to her, will be: I accept the blame for what happened, but the bigger problems were Russian meddling, Comey's on-again, off-again handling of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's probe of her private email server, the Democratic Party, and maybe even some of her own campaign staffers.

The Clintons, associates say, are convinced that the election was stolen. They may be right; we'll find out soon enough whether there's proof that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia. If investigations by congressional committees and special counsel Robert Mueller turn up new facts, that'll provide a better basis for analyzing the impact.

But Clinton is the wrong messenger. She just comes across as a sore loser.

Or as Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer told the Washington Post last month: "When you lose to somebody who has 40-percent popularity, you don't blame other things -- Comey, Russia -- you blame yourself."

She could take a lesson from another prominent Democrat, one who has kept a relatively low profile since January. That's former President Barack Obama, who has mostly resisted the temptation to strike back at repeated Trump cheap shots. Today, surveys of voters have found, he's the most popular American politician. Some Democrats want him to take on Trump a bit more, and are pleased he'll be out campaigning for a few Democrats this fall.

By contrast, Clinton has moved from being an admired former New York senator and secretary of state to becoming a divisive and unpopular figure. In last month's Bloomberg national poll, 58 percent of respondents rated her unfavorably compared to 39 percent who gave her favorable marks. More than one in five people who voted for her in November now regard her unfavorably. That was even worse than Trump's standing in the same poll.

Indeed, the only figure with higher negatives in the survey, which was conducted by the Iowa polling firm Selzer & Co., was her old nemesis, Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/al-qaeda-publishes-blueprint-attacks-key-u-s-transportation-systems/>

Al Qaeda Publishes Blueprint for Attacks on Key U.S. Transportation Systems

By Adam Kredo, 8/15/17

The al Qaeda terror group's chief bomb maker has published a blueprint for new attacks on U.S. transportation systems, including planes, trains, and boats, which the terror group views as "prime targets," according to a copy of a lengthy manifesto that provides a guide for would-be terrorists to launch attacks.

Ibrahim al-Asiri, a top al Qaeda leader known as the terror group's chief bomb maker, detailed the extremist organization's plans to target U.S. passenger and shipping transportation services, which the terror organization views as weak links ripe for attack.

While al Qaeda's operations have been weakened by years of U.S. attacks on its key locations and apparatus, it has increasingly relied on promulgating its radical ideology to so-called "lone wolves" who are not officially affiliated with the group but who are capable of carrying out terror attacks without detection by American authorities.

The shift to lone-wolf attacks highlights al Qaeda's continued influence and brand strength among jihadists following the rise of splinter groups such as ISIS. Al Qaeda is still a primary source of concern for the U.S. intelligence community, which continues to see the group as a central threat against American safety.

Al-Asiri emphasizes in his manifesto, published in the latest issue of al Qaeda's chief propaganda organ Inspire Magazine, that lone jihadists could easily carry out terror attacks on bustling locales, such as airports and train stations.

"We will be focusing on targeting means of transportation," the terror leader writes in the English-language article, which was first highlighted by the Middle East Media Research Institute. "We will explain more on this, which is part of the general policy of targeting the ring of security in the chain."

"When referring to transportation we refer to air, sea, and ground transportation—both local and international. Jihad groups and organizations may have the ability to target international means of transportation," according to the al Qaeda leader. "As for the Lone Mujahid, his abilities may be limited to targeting internal means of transportation of a country. And it is possible for him to draw a comprehensive plan so as to execute such kind of operations."

Trains are of particular significance to this plan, especially freight trains that carry a range of key consumer products.

"In America, trains are considered to be among the most important means of transportation within the country," the article states. "What becomes apparent is that it is too difficult to protect these means of transportation. And here is where we find its vulnerability—means of transportation today are considered to be a weak point which we must focus on."

The al Qaeda leader urges potential terrorists to focus on three key areas: The trains themselves, the routes they follow, and stations they might stop at.

Due to the difficulty in policing and monitoring these areas, they are viewed as a prime target to cause the most mayhem. An attack would not only disrupt the U.S. economy, but foster panic in the American population and drain many resources, according to the blueprint.

"Some transport companies may get into bankruptcy if targeted regularly and are unable to secure themselves, this will make people seize using such a company for their transportation needs," according to the article. "These are the most important consequences that may accompany these kind of operations."

Attacks of this nature can be carried out on a small budget and cause significant amounts of damage and death, which is of particular interest to al Qaeda.

"With little resources, it is possible to achieve great results, this is, if the operations is well executed and planned," according to the blueprint article. "The results of these kind of operations

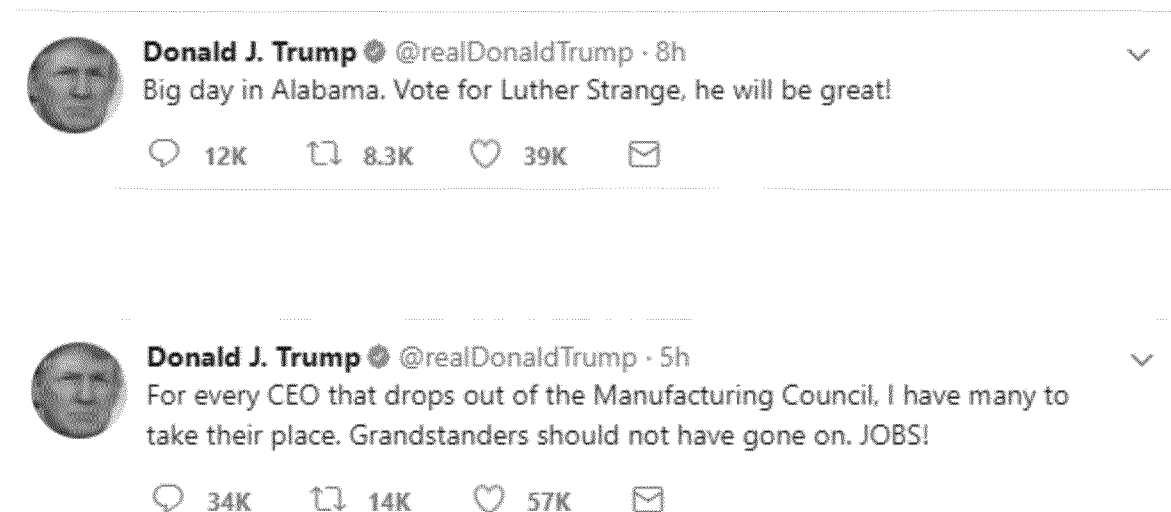
are disastrous to the economy, especially if they occur regularly."

"It is difficult for the authorities to secure all security loopholes in these operations," the terror leader states. "The ability to use different kinds of weapons, and ways to subdue the enemy according to the conditions and circumstances at hand."

The article ends with al Qaeda's traditional call to violence against America and its Western allies.

"Target America, by Allah they are in a great predicament," the article states. "We should continue to focus our efforts against it until the world gets rid of this international system led by America, and until Muslims enjoy freedom to practice their faith, freedom to apply the Laws of Allah and until Muslims secure themselves, wealth and resources from the hands of America."

TRUMP TWEETS



To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Kevin Bogardus
Sent: Fri 3/9/2018 4:42:43 PM
Subject: RE: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

Gotcha. Many thanks, Jahan. And please let me know if you guys can name the other vendor bidding for the contract. Thanks again.

-Kevin

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2018 11:27 AM
To: Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

Correct, Strategies 360

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 9, 2018, at 10:16 AM, Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net> wrote:

Many thanks, Jahan. This is a big help. I really appreciate it.

Just so we are clear, I'm going to say in my story that Go BIG Media, Inc. was contracted by EPA to help produce EPA's "EPA Year in Review 2017-2018" report (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/year_in_review_3.5.18.pdf). I will also note that the document was ultimately made in-house, per your statement.

Also, I believe you are referring to Strategies 360 and the What's Upstream campaign, which I have covered in the past (<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060053483>). Please tell me if you are referring to a different firm.

And I have one follow-up questions, which is:

✍ Can you name the other vendor – the \$29,140 one – who bid for this contract?

Please get back to me before my deadline of 12:30 pm EST today. Thanks again for your help.

-Kevin

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2018 10:02 AM
To: Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

“We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house. This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager’s PR firm to run EPA’s What’s Upstream campaign.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On Mar 9, 2018, at 9:35 AM, Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net> wrote:

Hey guys,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

Myself and a colleague are working on a piece about Go BIG Media, Inc. and EPA. Go BIG Media, a Republican media firm, signed a contract with EPA last month to help produce an "end of year report" (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>). I had some questions for you about this, which are:

✍• Did Go BIG Media, Inc. work on EPA's "EPA Year in Review 2017-2018" report (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/year_in_review_3.5.18.pdf)? If so, what exactly did Go BIG Media do on the report? Editing? Graphics? Design? Please be specific as possible.

✍• Did EPA pay Go BIG Media for this work on the report? If so, how much? According to [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) data, \$0 of the contract has been obligated but Elliot Fuchs, Go BIG Media's controller, told me that EPA did pay the firm \$6,500 for its work for the agency. I wanted to check that with you to make sure it was accurate.

✍• How did Go BIG Media end up doing this work for EPA? Who contacted who first?

✍• Is Go BIG Media's work on this report required under the contract Go BIG Media signed with EPA last month for "design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report" (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>)?

✍• The [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) data shows there were two offers received for this contract. Who else bid for this contract?

✍• Go BIG Media is a Republican media firm. The last time a Republican firm, Definers Corp., had a contract with EPA, Definers ended up losing its contract with EPA. Are you worried about a similar backlash to this contract?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

E&E News reporter

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EnergyWire, ClimateWire, E&E Daily, Greenwire, E&ENews PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Fri 6/9/2017 10:54:03 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Samsung: BREAKING: TRUMP fires back at COMEY: 'Despite so many false statements and lies, total and complete vindication' ... and he brands Comey a 'leaker' -- CHAOS in U.K. election: THERESA MAY likely staying as PM

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's PLAYBOOK presented by Samsung
06/09/2017 06:50 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

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Happy Friday. BREAKING IN LONDON -- AP: "Prime Minister Theresa May plans to seek the permission of Queen Elizabeth II to form a government even though her Conservative Party lost its majority in the House of Commons. Downing Street says she plans to meet the queen at 12:30 p.m. local time (1130 GMT).

"May will need the support of another party or group of parties to command a majority. Her plan of calling an early election in the hopes of getting a bigger majority than she enjoyed during the previous parliament backfired in Thursday's general election." <http://apne.ws/2saHvzu>

FROM THE GUARDIAN -- "May has the right to remain in office and try to assemble a working government - but she is under intense pressure from senior colleagues, many of whom blame her for a botched manifesto launch and a wobbly campaign." <http://bit.ly/2slq0fF>

IMPORTANT CONTEXT: From POLITICO Europe's Tom McTague in London -- "If Brussels had come round to the prospect of an unyielding two-year Brexit negotiation under May -- grating in its parochialism maybe, but at least grown-up -- they now face the nightmare prospect of a new partner across the table or a weakened May beholden to her backbenchers and a small retinue of Northern Irish MPs." <http://politi.co/2rcr7ts>

BREAKING at 6:10 a.m. -- STATEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: "Despite so many false statements and lies, total and complete

vindication...and WOW, Comey is a leaker!" ***This statement was made on Twitter.***

-- **THIS IS A BIG DEAL:** The president of the United States appears to be accusing the former FBI director of lying under oath. He doesn't directly say that James Comey lied while testifying Thursday, but comes pretty close.

-- **SEN. BRIAN SCHATZ (D-HAWAII) (@brianschatz):** "Making a false statement to Congress is a felony. This is not just another silly tweet."

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT -- Lawmakers will say if the president believes Comey lied, Trump himself should come to Capitol Hill and testify under oath about his recollection of events. This is why keeping quiet is oftentimes the best idea. **TRUMP** has now created a whole new storyline that is certain to distract Washington for the days and weeks to come.

NOTE that most Republicans yesterday didn't accuse James Comey of lying -- in fact, many of them called him honest and honorable. They just took issue with whether Trump directly asked Comey to drop the Russia investigation.

FOR THE PRESIDENT -- WHAT THE STATES YOU WON ARE WAKING UP TO --
CHARLOTTE OBSERVER: "Comey says Trump lied about his firing: Burr offers low-key defense of Trump" <http://politi.co/2rTlyBY> ... **PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER:** "Comey Challenges Trump ... FIRING: Former FBI director says president's reasons for dismissal 'were lies' ... RUSSIA PROBE: He says request to 'let Flynn go' felt like improper pressure ... LEAK: He admits divulging personal memos in order to prompt a special prosecutor" <http://politi.co/2skZBhU> ... **DES MOINES REGISTER:** "COMEY SLAMS TRUMP 'LIES': White House: Testimony proves that president has acted appropriately" <http://politi.co/2saFwuY> ... **THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER:** "COMEY: TRUMP LIED 'PLAIN AND SIMPLE'" <http://politi.co/2saAkr7>

WHAT REPUBLICANS ARE SAYING -- Forget what the White House thinks of yesterday's testimony. We spent the day in the Capitol, talking to Republican members of Congress -- the ones that have to vote on President Donald Trump's agenda -- and they were absolutely shocked at how poorly yesterday went for the president. Publicly they say that the president is a political neophyte who is still learning the presidency. But privately, they said James Comey was extraordinarily convincing and Trump's team absolutely botched their response. They're all afraid of more shoes dropping.

MARC KASOWITZ, Trump's lawyer who offered the principal rebuttal to the main event, made a legal argument, which mostly ignored the political reality that an FBI director called the president of the United States a liar and described what most termed disturbing interactions under oath. Trump's political standing on Capitol Hill is growing more and more perilous. Meanwhile, the RNC's principal rebuttal seemed to be that the Obama administration had a bad day -- which is true, but almost entirely irrelevant.

REPUBLICANS were shocked just how well Comey came across. He didn't try to jam

his viewpoint down the committee's throat, he was confident but not cocky and admitted, on several occasions, that his impression of his interactions could've be faulty, but the evidence otherwise seemed overwhelming to lawmakers.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE -- How much Trump's weakened position could thwart the GOP agenda. Senate Republicans are plodding their way through health care reform with no definite deal in sight. For every fix, Senate Republicans seem to find another problem. And while Trump has promised the biggest tax cut in the country's history, Republicans are increasingly bearish on a massive rewrite of the tax code. Instead, most are eyeing a simpler and smaller tax cut as a more realistic option.

THE BIG PICTURE -- PETER BAKER on A1 -- "For Trump, the 'Cloud' Just Grew That Much Darker," by NYT's Peter Baker: "[T]hanks to Mr. Trump's own actions, the cloud darkened considerably on Thursday and now seems likely to hover over his presidency for months, if not years, to come. Rather than relieve the pressure, Mr. Trump's decision to fire Mr. Comey has generated an even bigger political and legal threat. In his anger at Mr. Comey for refusing to publicly disclose that the president was not personally under investigation, legal experts said, Mr. Trump may have actually made himself the target of an investigation. While delivered in calm, deliberate and unemotional terms, Mr. Comey's testimony on Thursday was almost certainly the most damning j'accuse moment by a senior law enforcement official against a president in a generation." <http://nyti.ms/2rHGaiq>

JOSH GERSTEIN AND KYLE CHENEY's "Five takeaways from Comey's dramatic testimony": "From the outset, Comey regarded Trump as a liar. Comey's prepared statement made it clear that the former FBI director was troubled by his interactions with Trump in recent months, but it wasn't until Comey's live testimony Thursday that the FBI director suggested he harbored doubts about Trump's honesty from the very first time he met him - and perhaps even earlier. ...

"The cloud is growing, not lifting. Comey testified that Trump repeatedly asked him to help lift the 'cloud' of the Russia investigation dogging his administration. But even though Comey confirmed Trump wasn't personally under investigation as of May 9, his testimony complicates life for a president trying to wash away the stain of the scandal. ... **New mysteries.** Comey's startling testimony may have provided striking revelations about his meetings with the president, but what he declined to discuss may be even juicier. ...

"Collateral damage. Trump was expected to take a bruising at Thursday's hearing and it seemed inevitable that Comey would also take some hits over his actions. Both those things transpired, but what was less expected was the collateral damage to a slew of others, including Sessions, former Attorney General Loretta Lynch and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. ... **Partisanship reigns.** The aftershocks from Comey's testimony are still reverberating but it took virtually no time for partisans to retreat to their corners and begin sniping at each other over the meaning and import of what he said." <http://politi.co/2rcwkBr>

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS -- "Comey told senators Sessions may have met Russia's ambassador a third time," by CNN's Manu Raju, Evan Perez and Jim Sciutto: "Former FBI Director James Comey told senators in a closed hearing this afternoon that Attorney General Jeff Sessions may have had a third interaction with Russia's ambassador to the U.S., according to people familiar with the briefing. The information is based in part on Russian-to-Russian intercepts where the meeting was discussed ... But the sources said it is possible the ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, was exaggerating the extent of the encounter." <http://cnn.it/2sarx8r>

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung is committed to creating high-skilled jobs, investing in cutting-edge manufacturing and R&D, and forming trusted partnerships nationwide. Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years, with 18,500 employees across the country. Our Austin, TX semiconductor facility is one of the single-largest U.S. FDI's. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

BEFORE THE TWEET -- TARA PALMERI, ELIANA JOHNSON and JOSH DAWSEY proved prescient, in a story posted at 5:26 p.m. yesterday: "[A]s the day wore on, aides began to voice concerns that their boss would 'explode' later in the evening or on Friday after he watches TV news coverage and talks to friends in New York and Florida - a pattern of delayed response that's repeated itself in the months since Trump took office. ... Trump was also quiet after setbacks like the failure of his first health care bill in March, only to fire back the next day on Twitter." <http://politi.co/2rcFgXD>

--MAGGIE HABERMAN and GLENN THRUSH on NYT A13, "'I Was Right': As Trump Watches Comey on TV, Anxiety Yields to Relief": "In all, Mr. Trump watched only about 45 minutes of Mr. Comey's testimony, the people close to the president said. Much of that time was spent under the eye of his take-charge personal lawyer, Marc E. Kasowitz, and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, one of the cabinet members he trusts most. This was by design, with the president's tacit consent. His aides packed the day with meetings and speechwriting sessions, including a 90-minute sit-down focusing on North Korea, Qatar and the terrorist attacks in Iran with the national security adviser, H. R. McMaster; Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson; and Mr. Mattis. ... There was pleasure among White House aides with how Republican senators - who largely avoided taking on the president - performed in the hearing." <http://nyti.ms/2slnxSm>

-- PHIL RUCKER and BOB COSTA in WaPo, "Behind Trump's silence: Why the counterpuncher let others do the punching": "[Kasowitz's] combative presentation was on full display Thursday as he read from a statement that contained two typos. (He misspelled 'president' as 'predisent,' and the surname of Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats as 'Coates.')" ***With cameos by Rudy Giuliani, Chris Ruddy, Sam Nunberg, Jack Quinn, and Boyden Gray*** <http://wapo.st/2t0OIDS>

TODD S. PURDUM in Politico, "Comey's devastating indictment of President Donald Trump": "Comey had not finished testifying before the White House deputy press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, was moved to insist, 'I can definitively say

the president is not a liar. I think it's frankly insulting.' Such protestations from any White House are never a good thing. (See Richard Nixon's, 'I am not a crook,' and Bill Clinton's, 'I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky,' just for starters)." <http://politi.co/2r8QUay>

LATE-NIGHT BEST - STEPHEN COLBERT on Comey's testimony: "He thought Trump might lie. That's razor-sharp FBI instinct in action right there. Fellas, look, I don't want to get out over my skis here but I think this dead body might not be alive." **Video** <http://bit.ly/2r8VGFO>

THE NEXT TURN OF THE SCREW -- "Comey's Testimony Sharpens Focus on Questions of Obstruction," by NYT's Charlie Savage: "If one believes James B. Comey's account of his encounters with President Trump, it could present a prosecutable case of obstruction of justice, several former prosecutors said Thursday. But they also cautioned that little is normal about this situation. The Justice Department has long argued that the Constitution does not permit prosecuting a sitting president. And even if Mr. Trump left office first - through impeachment, or simply by losing re-election in 2020 - there is no guiding precedent in which any former president has been indicted on a charge of ordering a criminal investigation closed for improper reasons." <http://nyti.ms/2rHShMa>

POLITICO MAGAZINE FRIDAY COVER - "Will Comey's Testimony Matter? Legal experts tell us what Thursday's high-drama hearing means for Trump and the Russia investigation" <http://politi.co/2saJqnG>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Jared Kushner Could Meet With Senate Intel Committee Staffers This Month, Sources Say," by NBC News' Kasie Hunt and Phil Helsel: "The Senate Intelligence Committee expects top presidential adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner to meet with committee staffers this month, two sources familiar with the planning told NBC News Thursday. A third source familiar with the conversations said discussions about timing are still ongoing. The committee expects Kushner will meet with staff, provide documents and ultimately take questions from the senators, the two sources said." <http://nbcnews.to/2rl4QHh>

NEXT WEEK'S NEW YORKER COVER - BARRY BLITT did next week's cover illustration, "Modern Times," which shows Trump (wearing a long red tie) caught in the gears. Blitt writes: "Charlie Chaplin and Donald Trump both get caught in the grinding gears of modern times. But with Trump it's not so funny." <http://bit.ly/2skW3w6>

SNEAK PEEK - WHAT VLADIMIR PUTIN told Oliver Stone for his Showtime special about what he thinks about Sen. John McCain. "[H]onestly, I like Senator McCain to a certain extent. And I'm not joking. I like him because of his patriotism, and I can relate to his consistency in fighting for the interests of his own country." **2-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2sKbJ9J>

BUZZ: THE NEW LOYALTY TEST? -- An aide to a Democratic Senate Judiciary

committee member told us that he expects that FBI director pick Christopher Wray will be asked in a confirmation hearing if he pledged "loyalty" to Trump in the interview process.

THE LATEST ON HEALTH CARE -- "Senate GOP finds a new problem for every one resolved on Obamacare repeal," by Adam Cancryn, Jen Haberkorn, Burgess Everett and Rachana Pradhan: "Senate Republicans hoping to get the bulk of an Obamacare repeal bill done within the next few days keep finding a new problem for every old one they get closer to resolving.

"A burst of optimism that they could agree on a more generous version of the House-passed repeal bill was quickly doused by concerns over the cost. An emerging consensus on subsidies to stabilize shaky insurance markets was countered by a threat that crucial abortion restrictions could derail the effort altogether. And looming over it all, lawmakers are still struggling to bridge the deep divide over the future of Medicaid.

"Building consensus is hard,' Sen. John Cornyn , the chamber's No. 2 Republican, said earlier this week. 'We've all got a better idea. But pretty soon we're going to have to make a decision on a single bill.'" <http://politi.co/2slewbZ>

THE JUICE ...

-- **TRUMP CAMPAIGN VETS**, members of the "45 Club", gathered at Morton's Thursday night. **SPOTTED:** Scott Mason, Anthony Pugliese, Matt Mowers, Paul Gates and Kirk Bell.

-- **SPOTTED** last night at The Palm for a party honoring longtime maitre d' Tommy Jacomo: Kellyanne Conway, Wolf Blitzer, Tony Kornheiser, James Carville and Mary Matalin. The shindig included a pre fixe menu for dinner, balloons, a video of Tommy and pictures of him throughout the years.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr and Vice Chairman Mark Warner greet fired FBI Director James Comey before his testimony on Capitol Hill on June 8. | John Shinkle/POLITICO

SILICON VALLEY WATCH -- "Tech CEOs Cook, Bezos, Catz Said to Attend Kushner-Led Summit," by Bloomberg's Mark Bergen and Brian Womack: "Leaders from the largest technology companies are set to visit the White House later this month for an inaugural meeting of President Donald Trump's group formed to modernize government services, according to three people familiar with the plans. ... The list of planned attendees include Apple Inc. Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook, Microsoft Corp. CEO Satya Nadella, Amazon.com Inc. CEO Jeff Bezos, Oracle Co-CEO Safra Catz and

International Business Machines Corp. CEO Ginni Rometty ... Alphabet Inc. plans to send Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt." <https://bloom.bg/2slapNb>

-- IT'S WORTH NOTING: Despite the tech industry's tough talk on Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Climate agreement and over his administration's proposed travel ban, neither appear to have made as big of an impact on the RSVPs for Kushner's summit as some insiders expected.

TRY THIS ONE ON FOR SIZE -- "Trump Picks Scaramucci to Be Ambassador to OECD, Sources Say," by Bloomberg's Jen Jacobs: "President Donald Trump will appoint SkyBridge Capital founder Anthony Scaramucci ambassador to the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said two people familiar with the plan. Scaramucci, 53, was a campaign fundraiser for Trump and regular adviser during the presidential transition, appearing almost every day at Trump Tower and regularly defending the president on television." <https://bloom.bg/2slnaHp>

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years. Today, we employ more than 18,500 people across the country, covering nearly every state. Samsung Austin Semiconductor (SAS) hosts 6,000+ manufacturing and engineering jobs and has become a \$17bn investment - making it one of the largest single FDI's in the U.S. We're also committed to building strong communities through citizenship and support of programs for children's health, STEAM education, veterans and military families. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

NO!!!! -- "Trump's Aluminum Tax Could Make Your Beer More Expensive," by Bloomberg's Joe Deaux: "Donald Trump's efforts to save American metal-making jobs by punishing cheap imports may come with a bitter side effect: pricier beer. That's the view of Tim Weiner, senior commodity risk manager at Molson Coors Brewing Co. and its MillerCoors LLC unit. ... [I]f the U.S. does impose import duties on primary aluminum, it will affect the roughly 5,000 brewers scattered across every congressional district, Weiner said." <https://bloom.bg/2s35akG>

OFF MESSAGE PODCAST: HRC PREZ CALLS OUT IVANKA -- Human Rights Campaign president Chad Griffin blasted President Trump and other members of his administration - including the president's daughter and senior adviser Ivanka Trump. "An ally is not someone who tells people that they're an ally. An ally is not someone who sends a tweet to show that they're an ally. An ally is someone who stands up and fights for a cause," Griffin told Isaac Dove on "Off Message." Ahead of a weekend of nationwide Pride marches, Griffin said he'd like to say this directly to Ivanka, but he'd be wary of an invitation to the White House: "Anyone who is invited to meet with this president needs to be careful that they're not being used."

Isaac also talked to Tony-nominated "Indecent" playwright Paula Vogel, who says she'd love it if Mike Pence made her show about the outrage over a 1920s Yiddish theater play featuring a lesbian kiss - his next stop on Broadway after "Hamilton." "You

don't want to write something that preaches to the converted, all right? You want to convert," she said. <http://politi.co/2saDGdJ> ... **Listen and subscribe** <http://apple.co/2nEa7y0>

NERDCAST PODCAST: James Comey made his first public appearance as the former director of the FBI Thursday. POLITICO's Scott Bland, Charlie Mahtesian, Ken Vogel and Eliana Johnson break down what he said and what it means for the Russia investigation. Plus, the latest on New Jersey and Virginia's gubernatorial races and what they say about the future of the Democratic Party - and what's new in Georgia's intense special House election. **Listen and subscribe** <http://apple.co/2qA91oh>

MEDIAWATCH -- JOHN DICKERSON, "Face the Nation" moderator and CBS News Chief Washington Correspondent, is now a contributing editor to The Atlantic. He will write regularly for the print magazine and the website. **His first piece for The Atlantic, "Donald Trump Is an Impossible Boss"** <http://theatlantic.com/2sas9uX>

Playbookers

SUNDAY SO FAR -- CBS' "Face the Nation": Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) ... Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.). Political panel: Julie Pace, Susan Page, David Ignatius and Ed O'Keefe.

--NBC's **"Meet the Press"** is pre-empted for NBC Sports' coverage of the French Open.

--**"Fox News Sunday":** Panel: Karl Rove, Donna Edwards, Newt Gingrich, Charles Lane

--CNN's **"State of the Union,"** guest-hosted by Dana Bash: Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine). Panel: Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.), former Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), Neera Tanden, David Urban

- **CNN's "Inside Politics":** Jackie Kucinich, Carl Hulse, Manu Raju, Sara Murray

SPOTTED: Sen. Debbie Stabenow yesterday on Delta 5:37 p.m. flight from DCA to DTW (h/t James K.A. Smith)

OUT AND ABOUT -- Over 115 Muslim American leaders gathered last night on the rooftop of 20 F Street for the first annual bipartisan congressional Iftar. PAKPAC and MPAC sponsored the event, and they honored Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) and Virginia AG Mark Herring as "champions of religious liberty." **ALSO SPOTTED:** Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) (who spoke passionately about recent events in Oregon), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.), Ed Royce (R-Calif.), Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), Brad Schneider (D-Ill.) and Brendan Boyle (D-Pa.)

SPOTTED: At a post-Comey hearing happy hour last night at Del Frisco's Double Eagle to say farewell to Obama DOJ chiefs of staff Margaret Richardson, Airbnb's director of global policy development who is moving to the Bay Area, and Sharon Werner, who is joining PNC Bank as in-house senior executive in Pittsburgh: Former Attorney General Eric Holder, former Acting AG Sally Yates, and DOJ alums Jenny Mosier, Molly Moran, Stuart Delery, Brian Fallon, Tom Perrelli, Karol Mason, Dave O'Neil, Raj De, Kevin Lewis, Amy Jeffress, Bill Baer, Tracy Schmalzer, Emily Pierce, Adora Jenkins, Brin Frazier, Jim Garland, John Bies, Peter Kadzik, Alicia O'Brien, Heather Childs, Riley Roberts, Jake Maccoby, Helaine Greenfeld, and Annie Bradley.

SPOTTED last night at a reception at Entertainment Software Association hosting college students interning on the Hill with College to Congress: House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), Michael D. Gallagher, Audrey Henson, Tom Wilbur, Lyndon Boozer, Susan Brooks, Rebecca Card, Tim Lordan, Megan Mitchell.

--**Former Sen. Bob Dole** was the special guest at a reception last night at the Kaiser Permanente Center on Total Health in honor of the 30th Anniversary of the National Academy of Social Insurance. **SPOTTED:** Earl Pomeroy, Bob Greenstein, John Rother, Peter Edelman, Lisa Mensah, Judy Feder, Ruth Fein, Steve McConnell, and Bill Hoagland.

TRANSITIONS -- Ernst & Young hired **Adam Chepenik** as a principal based in Washington. He was previously Treasury's deputy director of the office of state and local finance - an office he helped establish in 2014. <https://go.ey.com/2r8kk8N> ... The American Conservative Union has hired **Michi Iljazi** as director for government affairs, while the American Conservative Union Foundation has named **Jackie Anderson** as director of policy and public affairs. <http://politi.co/2saDD1x>

... iHeartMedia has hired **Meagan Riley** to manage relationships with progressive candidates, parties and advocacy groups, along with trade associations and industry coalitions. She previously was at 1776. iHeartMedia has also hired **Bryan Watkins** for the same role, but working with conservatives. He previously was at Townhall Media.

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: **Jess O'Connell**, CEO of the DNC. How she's celebrating: "My wife and I are headed to New York for dinner and a show. We're going to see 'Come From Away.' It's actually a wedding gift from last year from some great friends and we're just now getting to it. Still deciding on restaurants for dinner. Looking for recommendations!" Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2rl0cJo> ... **Jeff Solnet**, senior associate at Precision Strategies. How he's celebrating: "Well, my Precision Strategies colleagues kicked off the festivities yesterday by surprising me mid-meeting with some great bourbon and a gift certificate to one of my favorite coffee shops. I'm out of town for a wedding tonight, but my girlfriend hosted a surprise roof-top dinner last night!" Q&A: <http://politi.co/2r20SXl>

BIRTHDAYS: Margaret Talev, senior White House correspondent for Bloomberg (hat tip: Richard Keil) ... Zac Petkanas, former Trump War Room director and senior adviser at the DNC and former rapid response director at HFA (h/ts Jesse Ferguson and Adrienne Watson) ... Lori Lodes, campaign manager for Protect Our Care, former COS for comms at HFA and former comms director at CMS (h/t Jesse) ... Marvin Kalb is 87 ... "Dial" Dick Vitale is 78 ... Aaron Sorkin is 56 ... Stephen Spector ... Miles O'Brien, science, technology, aviation and space journalist ... Liz Mair ... Aaron Sorkin is 56 ... Joe Curl ... Caroline Ryan, youngest daughter of Fred and Genny Ryan is 19 ... Bloomberg's Ashley Bahnken ... Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) is 84 ... Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge (h/t Judd P. Deere) ... Candi Wolff, Citi's EVP of global gov't affairs (h/t Kam Mumtaz) ... John David Howard, son of the White House's Ben Howard, is 3 (h/t proud grandpa Jack Howard of the U.S. Chamber) ... Politico's Ramsen Shamon ... CAP's Anne Venzor ... Betsy Mullins ...

... **Jeff Berkowitz**, an RNC alum now founder and CEO at Delve, a competitive intelligence and oppo research firm ... Ashley Lowerre, copywriter at the RNC and Targeted Victory alum (h/t Ali Swee) ... Brad Gallant ... Google's Ria Bailey-Galvis ... Robert Heath Townsend Jr. ... Raj Goyle ... Devin Banerjee, private equity and deals editor at Bloomberg ... Laura Matthews ... Diane Webber ... Frank Chi ... Carnegie science writer Natasha Metzler, an AP alum ... Maxwell Ealons - an original Obama baby, son of Corey and Dru ... Benj Pasek, a Tony Award-nominated songwriter ... Patrick Sheridan ... Alexandra Toma, executive director at Peace and Security Funders Group and fellow at Truman National Security Project ... Mike Smith ... Robyn Mills ... Andrew Mills ... Vicki Shabo (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... comedian Jackie Mason is 89 ... author Letty Cottin Pogrebin is 78 ... mystery author Patricia Cornwell is 61 ... Michael J. Fox is 56 ... Johnny Depp is 54 ... Natalie Portman is 36 (h/ts AP)

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Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bennett, Tate
Sent: Wed 6/7/2017 6:37:29 PM
Subject: Re: RELEASE | Rutledge Statement on EPA's Decision to Delay Ozone Rule Implementation

NICE!

On Jun 7, 2017, at 2:36 PM, Judd Deere <judd.deere@arkansasag.gov> wrote:

For your use if you need it. <http://www.arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-statement-on-epas-decision-to-delay-ozone-rule-implementation/>

From: Attorney General Leslie Rutledge Press Office
Sent: Wednesday, June 07, 2017 1:05 PM
To: Judd Deere
Subject: RELEASE | Rutledge Statement on EPA's Decision to Delay Ozone Rule Implementation

<image002.jpg>

June 7, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Judd Deere, (501) 317-9880

Judd.Deere@arkansasag.gov

Rutledge Statement on EPA's Decision to Delay Ozone Rule Implementation

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today released a statement after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it would give states more time to comply with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, an ozone regulation issued in 2015. Administrator Scott Pruitt today sent a letter to governors informing them that the EPA is extending the deadline for promulgating initial area designations by one year.

“Administrator Pruitt has made the right decision by extending this initial deadline for the states,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Arkansans take great pride in our clean air and the State has continually improved its air quality, but the burdensome and costly ozone regulation makes compliance nearly impossible while placing great financial strain on small, rural communities.”

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone is an outdoor air regulation under the Clean Air Act. As part of the process to determine what areas of the country are able to meet the current air quality standards, states are submitting their proposals for area designations. Areas designated as being in “nonattainment” of the standard face serious consequences, including: increased regulatory burdens, stiff federal penalties, lost highway dollars, restrictions on infrastructure investment and increased costs to businesses.

Rutledge challenged the new ozone regulation in a lawsuit filed in October of 2015, along with Arizona, North Dakota, Oklahoma and the New Mexico Environmental Department.

About Attorney General Leslie Rutledge

Leslie Carol Rutledge is the 56th Attorney General of Arkansas. She is the first woman and first Republican in Arkansas history to be elected to the office. Since taking office, she has begun a Mobile Office program, a Military and Veterans Initiative, a Metal Theft Prevention program and a Cooperative Disability Investigations program. She has led efforts to teach internet safety, combat domestic violence and make the office the top law firm for Arkansans. Rutledge also serves as Vice Chairwoman of the Republican Attorneys General Association

and re-established and co-chairs the National Association of Attorneys General Committee on Agriculture.

A native of Batesville, she is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law. Rutledge clerked for the Arkansas Court of Appeals, was Deputy Counsel for Gov. Mike Huckabee, served as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Lonoke County and subsequently was an Attorney at the Department of Human Services before serving as Counsel at the Republican National Committee. Rutledge and her husband, Boyce, have a home in Pulaski County and a farm in Crittenden County.

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From: Bennett, Tate
Sent: Wed 6/7/2017 6:37:24 PM
Subject: Fwd: RELEASE | Rutledge Statement on EPA's Decision to Delay Ozone Rule Implementation

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From: Judd Deere <judd.deere@arkansasag.gov>
Date: June 7, 2017 at 2:35:44 PM EDT
To: "Bennett, Tate" <Bennett.Tate@epa.gov>, "Wilcox, Jahan" <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: RELEASE | Rutledge Statement on EPA's Decision to Delay Ozone Rule Implementation

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Rutledge Statement on EPA's Decision to Delay Ozone Rule Implementation

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today released a statement after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it would give states more time to comply with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, an ozone regulation issued in 2015. Administrator Scott Pruitt today sent a letter to governors informing them that the EPA is extending the deadline for promulgating initial area designations by one year.

“Administrator Pruitt has made the right decision by extending this initial deadline for the states,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Arkansans take great pride in our clean air and the State has continually improved its air quality, but the burdensome and costly ozone regulation makes compliance nearly impossible while placing great financial strain on small, rural communities.”

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone is an outdoor air regulation under the Clean Air Act. As part of the process to determine what areas of the country are able to meet the current air quality standards, states are submitting their proposals for area designations. Areas designated as being in “nonattainment” of the standard face serious consequences, including: increased regulatory burdens, stiff federal penalties, lost highway dollars, restrictions on infrastructure investment and increased costs to businesses.

Rutledge challenged the new ozone regulation in a lawsuit filed in October of 2015, along with Arizona, North Dakota, Oklahoma and the New Mexico Environmental Department.

About Attorney General Leslie Rutledge

Leslie Carol Rutledge is the 56th Attorney General of Arkansas. She is the first woman and first Republican in Arkansas history to be elected to the office. Since taking office,

she has begun a Mobile Office program, a Military and Veterans Initiative, a Metal Theft Prevention program and a Cooperative Disability Investigations program. She has led efforts to teach internet safety, combat domestic violence and make the office the top law firm for Arkansans. Rutledge also serves as Vice Chairwoman of the Republican Attorneys General Association and re-established and co-chairs the National Association of Attorneys General Committee on Agriculture.

A native of Batesville, she is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law. Rutledge clerked for the Arkansas Court of Appeals, was Deputy Counsel for Gov. Mike Huckabee, served as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Lonoke County and subsequently was an Attorney at the Department of Human Services before serving as Counsel at the Republican National Committee. Rutledge and her husband, Boyce, have a home in Pulaski County and a farm in Crittenden County.

###



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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Wed 6/7/2017 5:58:27 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Samsung: COMEY's opening statement for tomorrow -- TRUMP picks CHRISTOPHER WRAY for FBI director -- Rogers, Coats say they never felt pressured -- WHAT BOEHNER said in Old Town last night -- HORNE to Twitter -- TIM...

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Samsung
06/07/2017 01:54 PM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

BREAKING -- JIM COMEY'S opening statement from tomorrow is up.
<http://bit.ly/2rMG1bK>

PLAYBOOK SCOOP -- GREAT INTRIGUE -- FORMER SPEAKER JOHN BOEHNER was hanging out at CXIII REX, the private cigar bar in Old Town last night, and was riffing on politics. **BOEHNER** said he would "rather be dead than run for the Senate." He also said President Donald Trump would have to "grow ears and listen" for him to go to the White House and serve as chief of staff.

SPOTTED lunching this afternoon: **KELLYANNE CONWAY** and **COREY LEWANDOWSKI** at Bobby Van's on 15th Street, NW.

Good Wednesday afternoon. TRUMP'S PICK FOR FBI -- "Trump taps Christopher Wray to head FBI," by Louis Nelson: "Wray served as an assistant attorney general from 2003 to 2005 during the tenure of former President George W. Bush. He is currently a partner at the law firm King & Spalding, where he chairs its special matters and government investigations practice group.

"At the Justice Department, Wray was the assistant attorney general in charge of the department's criminal division. He was a member of Bush's corporate fraud task force and led the task force charged with investigating the Enron scandal. More recently, Wray acted as New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's personal attorney during the federal investigation into lane closures on the George Washington Bridge that were put in place by members of Christie's administration as political retribution for a mayor who did not support the governor's reelection campaign." <http://politi.co/2sDUQNB> ... **Wray's law firm bio** <http://bit.ly/2s4tT8G>

-- Former Obama DOJ spokesman @matthewamiller: "Wray probably the best choice from the WH short list. His record in the Bush DOJ deserves scrutiny, but he's a serious, respectable pick."

GET SMART FAST -- "5 things to know about Trump's FBI pick Christopher Wray," by Josh Gerstein <http://politi.co/2sDUXsP>

-- **NO SENIOR REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS**, that we can tell, were given a heads up on this selection. Speaker Paul Ryan said this morning he doesn't know Wray but he seems good. **CHUCK GRASSLEY (R-IOWA)** and **DIANNE FEINSTEIN (D-CALIF.)**, the top two senators on the Senate Judiciary Committee, were not told about Wray's nomination in advance, our colleague Seung Min Kim (@seungminkim) tweeted.

TODAY'S HEARING -- ROSENSTEIN, MCCABE, ROGERS AND COATS -- LOTS OF 'WE WON'T DISCUSS THAT' -- Admiral Mike Rogers, director of the National Security Agency: "Today I am not going to talk about theoreticals. I am not going to discuss the specifics of any interactions or conversations that I may or may not have had with the president was United States, but I will make the following comment. In the three-plus years that I have been director of the National Security Agency, to the best of my recollection, I have never been directed to do anything I believe to be illegal, immoral, unethical or inappropriate and to the best of my recollection during that same period of service I do not recall ever feeling pressured to do so."

-- **DNI DAN COATS** was asked about today's Washington Post story (<http://wapo.st/2rTQxjk>), which said Trump asked him to intervene with the FBI about its Russia investigation. He said he would not discuss it in open session, but if you read between the lines, it seemed that he might discuss it in the closed session that's happening this afternoon.

JUST ASKING ... Which senator is going to spill the beans on the non-classified info said in the closed session.

-- **WORTH NOTING:** On several occasions, the witnesses cited the special counsel's investigation as a reason for not being able to answer questions.

-- **SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.)**, after being told by Coats he would not discuss the Washington Post story, but might in a closed session: "You know, it is just showing what kind of an Orwellian existence that we live in. It is detailed -- as you know -- from reading the story as to when you met, what you discussed, et cetera et cetera, yet here in a public hearing before the American people we can't talk about what was described in detail in this morning's Washington Post. Do you want to comment on that?" ... Chair **RICHARD BURR (R-N.C.)**, closing out the hearing: "At no time should you be in a position where you come to Congress without an answer." **More key moments from Nolan McCaskill** <http://politi.co/2sT5eAs>

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POTUS IN OHIO -- President Trump avoided mentioning his new pick for FBI director -- or James Comey's testimony tomorrow -- in a speech in Cincinnati. By this president's standards, this was a fairly standard speech. He talked up America's history of great infrastructure projects and said that "the future is going to be beautiful and the future is going to be bright" with his infrastructure plan, while decrying the decay of America's infrastructure. He promoted Saudi Arabia taking the lead in the fight against terrorism and "radical Islam." He also slammed Obamacare, saying it is in a "death spiral" and called Democrats obstructionists.

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "3 senior FBI officials can vouch for Comey's story about Trump," by Murray Waas in Vox: "One by one this winter, then-FBI Director James B. Comey pulled aside three of the bureau's top officials for private chats. In calm tones, he told each of them about a private Oval Office meeting with President Trump - during which, Comey alleged, the president pressed him to shut down the federal criminal investigation of Trump's then-national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

"Those three officials, according to two people with detailed, firsthand knowledge of the matter, were Jim Rybicki, Comey's chief of staff and senior counselor; James Baker, the FBI's general counsel; and Andrew McCabe, then the bureau's deputy director, and now the acting director, following Trump's firing of Comey last month. Comey spoke to them within two days of his Oval conversation with Trump, the sources said, and recounted the president's comments about the Flynn investigation."

<http://bit.ly/2sTokXm>

THE PIVOT -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:17 a.m.: "Getting ready to leave for Cincinnati, in the GREAT STATE of OHIO, to meet with ObamaCare victims and talk Healthcare & also Infrastructure!"

HOT DOC -- The Office of Government Ethics disclosed Wednesday roughly two dozen ethics waivers given to top executive branch officials. <http://bit.ly/2r2Fe9u>

THINGS PUTIN SAYS - per Bloomberg's Jake Rudnitsky, Ilya Arkhipov, and Henry Meyer: "While Putin expounds on favorite subjects including U.S. geopolitical overreach, he's also shown staring stone-faced at the classic Cold War doomsday satire Dr. Strangelove. He explained that he never has an off day as president because he's a man. 'I am not a woman, so I don't have bad days,' he tells [Oliver] Stone while giving a tour of the Kremlin's gilded throne room. 'I am not trying to insult anyone. That's just the nature of things. There are certain natural cycles.'" <https://bloom.bg/2rKLCPy>

NEW POLLS -- "Post-ABC Poll: Most say Trump is interfering with Russia investigations," by WaPo's Scott Clement and Emily Guskin: "A 56 percent majority of U.S. adults say Trump is interfering with such investigations rather than cooperating, while 61 percent say Trump fired Comey to protect himself rather than for the good of the country. Comey also faces serious credibility problems ahead of his highly anticipated Senate testimony Thursday, with 36 percent of Americans saying they trust

what he says about Russia and the election 'a great deal' or 'a good amount,' while 55 percent trust him less or not at all. The poll finds substantial skepticism across party lines, evidence that his role investigating the campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump has taken a toll." <http://wapo.st/2sDpbfr>

-- **A new Quinnipiac poll** found that 31 percent of American voters say Trump did something illegal in his relationship with Russia, while 29 percent said he did something unethical but not illegal. 32 percent said he did nothing wrong. **More on climate change and Trump and the media** <http://politi.co/2sEb6OL>

BIG BUSINESS -- FORTUNE has released its 63rd edition of the Fortune 500, its annual list of the largest corporations in the U.S. Combined, the companies have a total market value of \$19.4 trillion dollars and employ 28.2 million people. Wal-Mart takes the top spot for the fifth year in the row, followed by Berkshire Hathaway, Apple, Exxon Mobil, McKesson, UnitedHealth Group, CVS Health, General Motors, AT&T and Ford. **The list** <http://for.tn/2s3Xn6W> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2s4eSDX>

BIPARTISAN KUMBAYA- "Former VP Joe Biden to headline Mitt Romney summit in Park City," by AP's Steve Peoples: "Just days after launching a new political action committee, former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden will join Republican officials and donors at a weekend retreat hosted by former GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney. Biden will be interviewed by Romney during a Friday evening event in Park City, at the invitation-only summit, according to a Biden spokesman and participants briefed on the schedule." <http://bit.ly/2sCH91E>

D.C. MAYOR MURIEL BOWSER SPEAKS -- A big thank you to D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser for joining us last night at the first Playbook University event at Howard University's IN3 space. Bowser touched on everything from the honoring the Paris climate deal to her message to Trump and Congress to leave D.C. alone. And, the **HOT TOPIC** for many of our readers -- yes, she addressed the D.C. rat problem. **Videos -- Paris** <http://politi.co/2rB3ILa> ... **Her message to Trump, Congress** <http://politi.co/2sSYJh6> ... **And on D.C. rats** <http://politi.co/2sDEZia> ... **The full event** <http://politi.co/2s4uxTZ>

IN THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS -- "A Look Inside the Senate Hearing Room Where James Comey Will Testify Thursday," by NBC4 Washington's Scott MacFarlane and Andrea Swalec <http://bit.ly/2sDzT5w>

BRAD PARSCALE PROFILE - "Donald Trump's Michael Bay," by BuzzFeed's Henry J. Gomez: "Brad Parscale isn't a mysterious strategist like Steve Bannon. He doesn't live on TV like Kellyanne Conway. He's not even all that into politics. But the digital marketing specialist's loyalty to Donald Trump, his children, and his brand earned Parscale a central role in a winning White House campaign. How far will loyalty lead him?" <http://bzfd.it/2qVYktG>

TIM MILLER HEADS WEST - "Republican political operatives want to sell the dark

arts of opposition research to tech companies," by Recode's Tony Romm: "The newest startup setting up shop in the Bay Area is Definers Public Affairs, a Washington, D.C.-based outfit that seeks to apply the dark science of political opposition research to the business world. ... To the GOP-led political venture, Silicon Valley is a natural target for their so-called 'oppo' efforts. The tech industry is characteristically hyper-competitive, with boardroom squabbles, takeover attempts, and legal wars over employees and patents and regulations. ... [T]he firm's new Oakland-based operative [is] Tim Miller, who previously served as communications director to GOP presidential contender Jeb Bush." <http://bit.ly/2r2DzAG>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Cuomo rallies with Pelosi -- AFL-CIO endorses J.B. Pritzker in Illinois gubernatorial race <http://politi.co/2s4s0J9>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Why Breitbart Fired an Editor for a Tweet," by The Atlantic's Rosie Gray: Katie "McHugh's termination primarily reflects the site's change in leadership. The fact that under [Alex] Marlow, the site has to some extent bowed to public pressure, further underscores Bannon's absence at the helm." <http://theatlantic.com/2sEcP6G>

ON THE HILL -- "Inside the heaving, jostling Capitol media mob: 'We are one tripped senator away' from disaster," by WaPo's Elise Viebeck and Ben Terris: "Once thought to be going the way of the dodo bird or zeppelin repairman, journalists of the Trump era are crowding legislative hallways at such a startling density that the endangered species is starting to seem like ... an invasive one. ... While events like the Comey hearing naturally limit the number of reporters present - only so many people can actually fit into the room - the Capitol itself does not. Anyone with an active press credential can roam the grounds and the building. To a visiting White House reporter, the recent typical day on Capitol Hill might seem like anarchy." <http://wapo.st/2sT0uL5>

-- **@pkcapitol:** "So it begins. They're setting up corrals to pen in reporters in Senate basement. We did this to ourselves & deserve this treatment." <http://bit.ly/2sTqUwi>

TRANSITIONS -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- EMILY HORNE is joining Twitter as its global policy communications director. She is going to be the top spokesperson on topics like data, privacy and advocacy initiatives. She'll be based in D.C. Horne (@emilyjhorne) was the assistant press secretary and director for strategic communications at the National Security Council. She's a State Department alumna, and worked for Gen. John Allen. Emily is a GW alum.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Alexa Marrero, director of operations for corporate comms at Boeing and alum of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and House Education and Labor committees, and **Miguel Marrero**, director of technology development for REM-Fit, email friends and colleagues: "José Callin (Cal) Marrero arrived at 10:29 [Tuesday] morning, clocking in at 22 inches and 10 lb. 3 oz. He spent his first day at NorthShore Evanston hospital winning top honors for best hair and entertaining NFL scouts. He is an aviation and tech enthusiast like his father with a type

A, schedule-driven personality like his mother. We are thrilled to welcome this big little man, named for his father and both his grandfathers, to the world." **Pics**

<http://bit.ly/2r1wb8F> ... <http://bit.ly/2r5aZKb>

OUT AND ABOUT -- From Jewish Insider: "American Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad), led by Rabbi Levi Shemtov, held their annual Lamplighter Awards dinner at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in DC. Honorees included House Speaker Paul Ryan, World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, and former DC Mayor Anthony Williams. One notable bipartisan highlight of the evening featured Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer introducing Speaker Ryan. Hoyer thanked Ryan for his service and leadership to the country and noted that both he and the Speaker are 'institutionalists' who respect the traditions and decorum of the Congress. Ryan returned the compliment explaining that 'among both Republicans and Democrats, Steny Hoyer's word is gold.' Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer also delivered remarks focusing on the change in US policy towards Iran and at the UN."

SPOTTED: UAE Ambassador Yousef al-Otaiba, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), and David Kustoff (R-Tenn.), Rhoda Dermer, Howard Friedman, Dov Zakheim, Nancy Jacobson, Lisa and Charlie Spies, Tevi and Kami Troy, William Daroff, Steve Rabinowitz, Aaron Keyak, Dan Glickman, Bill Knapp, Azerbaijan's Ambassador Elin Suleymanov, Bulgarian Ambassador Tihomir Stoytchev.

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From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Wed 6/7/2017 10:39:12 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Samsung: NEW TWIST: Trump asked Coats to intervene on FBI probe -- THE DAWSEY DOWNLOAD -- SCOOP: Details on proposed high-tech visa rules -- BUZZ: Dems plot new strategy to extract info from W.H. -- B'DAY: Mike Pence is 58

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by Samsung
06/07/2017 06:36 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Good Wednesday morning. TODAY begins the most anticipated pair of Capitol Hill hearings in recent memory. Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats will testify today, and former FBI Director James Comey tomorrow. Additionally, the Coats hearing also features Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, NSA Director Michael Rogers and acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe. Start time: 10 a.m. Reporters are dying to get in. TV networks are expected to broadcast live. These 48 hours are certain to be a big part of the story of the Trump presidency. **THERE HAS ALSO BEEN AN UNCANNY** amount of news in the lead up to the Comey and Coats hearings.

A NEW PLOT TWIST -- WHAT WILL COME UP TODAY -- "Top intelligence official told associates Trump asked him if he could intervene with Comey on FBI Russia probe," by WaPo's Adam Entous: "The nation's top intelligence official told associates in March that President Trump asked him if he could intervene with then-FBI Director James B. Comey to get the bureau to back off its focus on former national security adviser Michael Flynn in its Russia probe, according to officials.

"On March 22, less than a week after being confirmed by the Senate, Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats attended a briefing at the White House together with officials from several government agencies. As the briefing was wrapping up, Trump asked everyone to leave the room except for Coats and CIA Director Mike Pompeo.

"The president then started complaining about the FBI investigation and Comey's handling of it, said officials familiar with the account Coats gave to associates. Two days

earlier, Comey had confirmed in a congressional hearing that the bureau was probing whether Trump's campaign coordinated with Russia during the 2016 race. After the encounter, Coats discussed the conversation with other officials and decided that intervening with Comey as Trump had suggested would be inappropriate, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive internal matters." <http://wapo.st/2rTQxjk>

-- **ONE THING TO REMEMBER:** Yes, Coats is going to be forced to answer for this. But he's a former senator. So he probably will get a touch more deference than anyone else in his position would.

UPPING THE ANTE -- "Sessions offered to resign before Trump's trip abroad," by Tara Palmeri, Eliana Johnson, and Josh Dawsey: "Attorney General Jeff Sessions offered his resignation to President Donald Trump amid Trump's rising frustration with the series of events that culminated in the appointment of a special counsel to investigate his campaign's contacts with Russian officials during last year's election.

"Trump ultimately refused Sessions' offer, which came just before Trump embarked on his first international trip in late May, according to a person who regularly speaks with Sessions. This person said the attorney general offered to resign out of a sense of obligation because he was aware of how angered Trump was about his decision to recuse from the Russia investigations in March. ...

"Trump has continuously -- sometimes publicly -- expressed his frustration with Sessions' decision to formally step back from any investigation of Russian election interference. Sessions has said his decision came after he consulted extensively with Justice Department lawyers about what was appropriate. A second source close to Sessions described Trump as 'obsessed' with Sessions' recusal, describing it as an ongoing flashpoint ever since Sessions made the decision. 'I guess it's finally gotten out that Trump is pissed at Jeff,' this person said." <http://politi.co/2r4vdDI>

SIREN -- THE COMEY HEARING, 10 A.M. THURSDAY -- "Comey Told Sessions: Don't Leave Me Alone With Trump," by NYT's Mike Schmidt and Matt Apuzzo: "The day after President Trump asked James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director, to end an investigation into his former national security adviser, Mr. Comey confronted Attorney General Jeff Sessions and said he did not want to be left alone again with the president, according to current and former law enforcement officials. Mr. Comey believed Mr. Sessions should protect the F.B.I. from White House influence, the officials said, and pulled him aside after a meeting in February to tell him that private interactions between the F.B.I. director and the president were inappropriate. But Mr. Sessions could not guarantee that the president would not try to talk to Mr. Comey alone again, the officials said." <http://nyti.ms/2qVsmxS>

JOSH DAWSEY SCOOP: "Comey talked with Mueller's team ahead of testimony": "Former FBI Director Jim Comey's testimony Thursday is one of the most highly anticipated hearings in recent memory -- but his words are unlikely to surprise special

counsel Robert Mueller, whose team has been in contact with Comey, according to two of his associates. Friends of Comey say they expect the testimony to largely stick to his conversations with President Donald Trump and is unlikely to break ground on the investigation into potential collusion with Russia and any of Trump's associates. That is not surprising, legal experts say, because of the ongoing investigation that Mueller took over last month.

"These people say Comey is trying to be careful 'to just describe what happened with the president and how he felt about it,' in the words of one associate. But this person said Comey 'wants to correct the record, from his point of view, on certain things the president and his aides have said.' One Comey friend said 'there had been conversations' between Comey and Mueller's team before the testimony and 'Mueller won't be surprised.'" <http://politi.co/2r4AhYU>

THE COUNTER ATTACK -- "White House looks for ways to undermine Comey's credibility," by AP's Julie Pace and Julie Bykowicz: "Both White House officials and an outside group that backs Trump plan to hammer Comey in the coming days for misstatements he made about Democrat Hillary Clinton's emails during his last appearance on Capitol Hill. An ad created by the pro-Trump Great America Alliance - a nonprofit 'issues' group that isn't required to disclose its donors - casts Comey as a 'showboat' who was 'consumed with election meddling' instead of focusing on combating terrorism. The 30-second spot is slated to run digitally on Wednesday and appear the next day on CNN and Fox News.

"The Republican National Committee has been preparing talking points ahead of the hearing, which will be aired live on multiple TV outlets. An RNC research email Monday issued a challenge to the lawmakers who will question Comey. There's bipartisan agreement, the email says, that Comey 'needs to answer a simple question about his conversations with President Trump: If you were so concerned, why didn't you act on it or notify Congress?'" <http://apne.ws/2r0RGX9> ... **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2rKTD7I>

INSIDE THE WEST WING -- WAPO'S BOB COSTA, ASHLEY PARKER AND PHIL RUCKER, "Trump, furious and frustrated, gears up to punch back at Comey testimony": "Alone in the White House in recent days, President Trump - frustrated and defiant - has been spoiling for a fight, according to his confidants and associates. Glued even more than usual to the cable news shows that blare from the televisions in his private living quarters, or from the 60-inch flat screen he had installed in his cramped study off the Oval Office, he has fumed about 'fake news.' Trump has seethed as his agenda has stalled in Congress and the courts. He has chafed against the pleas for caution from his lawyers and political advisers, tweeting whatever he wants, whenever he wants." <http://wapo.st/2r0Nu9L>

-- PERSONNEL NUGGETS: "The White House recently approached **Geoff Morrell** ... about coming inside the administration and overhauling the communications operation, according to three people with knowledge of the overture. Morrell declined to comment, but BP announced last month that Morrell would be moving to London this summer to

run government relations and communications for the company globally. **Scott Reed**, senior political strategist at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, was also approached about taking a communications role within the White House ... In addition, Laura Ingraham ... discussed joining the White House but made clear to officials that she is more comfortable remaining outside as a vocal Trump ally because of her many broadcasting and media commitments."

THE DAWSEY DOWNLOAD: WEST WING COUNTDOWN CLOCK DREAD -- "TVs are always on cable news in President Trump's West Wing, and several aides say they have watched the countdown clock to James Comey's nationally-televised testimony with dread.

"Inside the White House, some want to mount a forceful pushback to Comey's testimony if it's damaging to the president. Some strategies have been drawn up, and surrogates readied. Trump has mentioned the looming testimony to associates on several occasions and has told at least one person he might respond forcefully. But others are concerned that a forceful fight may only lead Comey to 'make it even worse,' one person said. There is a widespread belief in the White House that Trump poked Comey and started this whole thing by tweeting about 'tapes' of his conversations and saying the former FBI director told him he wasn't under investigation, according to several officials.

"So while Trump is traveling to Cincinnati -- and the White House is trying at all costs to show momentum for its beleaguered legislative agenda -- the clocks ticking on the TV are a reminder that 'nothing we do this week is going to matter,' in the words of one Trump adviser."

TRUMP AND PENCE'S DAY -- TRUMP will meet with "Obamacare victims" and speak about infrastructure in Cincinnati and **PENCE** is going to Houston to speak at the "2017 Astronaut Selection Announcement at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center."

COVERING THE COVERAGE: COMEY HEARING EDITION -- C-SPAN, which is pool for the Comey hearing, will be broadcasting the main event Thursday live in its entirety on the C-SPAN networks.

BIG PLAYBOOK SCOOP -- BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT NEW HIGH-TECH VISA RULES (with Morning Shift's Ted Hesson) -- The White House has been quietly working with the Justice Department on overhauling the H-1B program to better adhere to the administration's "Buy American, Hire American" order, sources told Playbook.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT is considering forcing companies seeking employees under the H-1B visa program to advertise the jobs online first and hire U.S. workers before foreigners -- even for these high-tech roles. The Trump administration is also discussing reducing the cap and duration for these visas -- which would, in effect, make it more costly for companies to bring foreign workers from overseas.

OTHER REGULATIONS include forcing H-1B employers to submit a report every six months on duties performed by the foreign worker. The administration could also seek to cut back "optional practical training," which currently allows STEM graduates to work in the U.S. for three years after graduation. Justice and the White House did not respond to a request for comment.

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BUZZ -- THE NEW DEMOCRATIC STRATEGY -- Democrats are outraged over the Trump administration's policy to ignore information requests unless it comes from Republican committee or subcommittee chairs. So they are trying to find ways to publicly put pressure on Trump and congressional Republicans to cough up information. Under discussion: they might post all information requests to the administration for the public. Democrats are also considering sending each inquiry to Republican committee and subcommittee chairs and explicitly asking them to sign onto the requests.

-- **HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY JOHN KELLY** testified Tuesday that DHS will respond to all congressional inquiries. "We're leaning forward," Kelly told members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. "Regardless of who the letter comes from, and it doesn't have to just come from a ranking member or chairman, we'll respond to any congressional inquiry." <http://politi.co/2r4SBRt>

THE NEW DEBT CEILING REALITY -- House Republican leaders said yesterday that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will handle debt ceiling negotiations. **WHAT'S THAT MEAN?:** That Congress is going to need to pass a clean debt-ceiling hike, which was an anathema to the party when they took the House majority in 2011, and remains an anathema to the conservative House Freedom Caucus. Many senators are more open to it. **WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN** : Republican leaders should make sure President Trump knows that he should push a quick debt-ceiling hike -- and be perfectly happy when it's passed with dozens of Democrats in the House. **BE AWARE:** The House Freedom Caucus is NOT going to like this and it could harm legislating for the rest of the year. **THE CASE TO DO IT SOON** : Democrats are much less likely to support a clean debt-ceiling hike as it gets closer to the end of the year. Even now, Democrats are going to make noise about Republicans needing to pass this on their own.

THINK OF THIS (h/t our former colleague, CNN's @mkraju): "Real chance this Congress could pass a clean debt ceiling hike, keep Planned Parenthood money, fail to repeal ACA, fail to reform tax code" ... **AND** fail to pass an infrastructure package.

OBAMACARE SPLIT -- "GOP Senators' Medicaid Clash Jeopardizes Health Deal," by WSJ's Kristina Peterson, Stephanie Armour and Louise Radnofsky: "Republican

senators left their first decision-making meeting on overhauling the nation's health-care system Tuesday deeply divided over the fate of Medicaid, a fissure that threatens to thwart their ambitions to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. The divide among Senate Republicans over Medicaid was wide enough that some GOP lawmakers and aides said they now believe it may be impossible to broker a deal to unwind the health law known as Obamacare. Some senators are already preparing to move to another goal, an overhaul of the tax code. 'It's more likely to fail than not,' Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) said of the health bill, citing the GOP's hardening factions over how to handle the expansion of Medicaid ushered in by former President Barack Obama's 2010 health law. 'We need to bring this to an end and move to taxes.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2r4NMHV>

NEVER GONNA HAPPEN, BUT GOOD POLITICS -- "Freedom Caucus: Cancel August recess," by Rachael Bade: "The House Freedom Caucus on Tuesday night called on Republican leadership to cancel the August recess to continue work on tax reform and other GOP priorities. The group of several dozen conservative hardliners during their weekly meeting took the official position to work through the break, which is quickly drawing near as Republicans scramble to pass President Donald Trump's agenda. 'We need to work through August recess to get everything done,' said Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), coming out of the meeting. 'We believe that we need to stay through August to get through tax reform... and get our appropriations done.'" <http://politi.co/2r4ClzT>

-- REALITY CHECK: The House isn't even staying in town this whole **WEEK**. House Republicans canceled their Friday session. Convenient: it allows them to skip talking about Comey!

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Texas Democrat intensifies Trump impeachment push," by Heather Caygle and John Bresnahan: "Rep. Al Green is drafting articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, saying the president should be forced from office for firing FBI Director James Comey in the middle of the bureau's ongoing Russia investigation. The articles of impeachment, which Green will officially announce Wednesday, follow increasing calls from some rank-and-file Democrats for Trump to be booted from office. 'Obstruction of justice by the president is the problem,' Green (D-Texas) said in a statement announcing his plan late Tuesday. 'Impeachment by Congress is the solution.'" <http://politi.co/2r0spfS>

-- "Talks heat up on Senate vote to sanction Russia," by Elana Schor: "Senior senators in both parties are making headway in a push for a vote on sanctioning Russia when the upper chamber takes up a bipartisan Iran sanctions bill later this week, according to a Senate source. ... Talks are ongoing over the details of the Senate's potential Russia sanctions amendment, which could include additional punitive measures against Vladimir Putin's government or a conversion of existing sanctions into law to make it harder for Trump to roll them back, the Senate source said." <http://politi.co/2rzYQ3e>

SUSAN B. "SCOOP" GLASSER in POLITICO Magazine, "The 27 Words Trump

Wouldn't Say: Here's the commitment the president refused to deliver at NATO headquarters": "We face many threats, but I stand here before you with a clear message: the U.S. commitment to the NATO alliance and to Article 5 is unwavering.' This was what President Donald Trump was supposed to say in his May 25 address to NATO leaders in Brussels as a way of reassuring them about his evolving views toward the European collective-security pact that he once dismissed as 'obsolete.' A senior administration source today provided me the language from the deleted sentence, which was part of the final version of the speech signed off on by the Pentagon on May 23; the National Security Council and State Department approved similar language."
<http://politi.co/2sRYqTN>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Islamic State claims attacks on Iran parliament, shrine," by AP's Amir Vahdat and Nasser Karimi in Tehran: "The Islamic State group claimed a pair of attacks Wednesday on Iran's parliament and the shrine of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which have killed two security guards and wounded more than 30 people, with the siege at the legislature still underway. It marks the first attack in Iran claimed by the extremist group, which is at war with Iranian-backed forces in Syria and Iraq. In a message posted through its Aamaq News Agency, the IS group claimed its fighters were behind the assaults." <http://apne.ws/2r1andu>

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Voters have a clear message for President Donald Trump: Stop tweeting," by Steven Shephard: "A new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll shows the vast majority of voters, 69 percent, say Trump uses Twitter too much. Fifty-nine percent say the president's use of Twitter is a bad thing, and even a majority of voters say Trump's tweets hurt U.S. national security.

"Even Trump's own base wants him to curb his Twitter use. A 53-percent majority of GOP voters say Trump tweets too much - though slightly more Republicans say Trump's use of Twitter overall is a good thing (41 percent) than a bad thing (37 percent)." <http://politi.co/2rUjDis>

THE JUICE ...

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: A number of prominent Democratic strategists are starting a group called the CHORUS Agency to provide pro-bono help for progressives looking to run for Congress or statehouse. The group, started by Kate Catherall, will attempt to help candidates who are committed to values of "equity, opportunity, inclusion, and justice." Senior advisers for the group include Marlon Marshall, Betsy Hoover, Reggie Cardozo, Lisa Conn, Max Wood, Luis Avila, Gabby Seay, Amy Chiou, Geoff Berman, and Saumya Narechania. *The new group's website* <http://bit.ly/2sSjn0C>

Playbook Reads

JOSH MEYER: "What Mueller's NFL probe means for Trump: Critics say former FBI

director let Commissioner Roger Goodell off the hook in his domestic violence investigation" <http://politi.co/2s3nY3Y>

TOM DeLAY IS BACK! Per Theo Meyer's Politico Influence: "Former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay has returned to lobbying, nearly four years after shedding his last lobbying client. DeLay's firm, First Principles, has registered to lobby for the HAPPE Corporation, a firm based in rural Coolin, Idaho, not far from the Canadian border, that has never hired a lobbyist before. ... DeLay will lobby on the American Health Care Act as the Senate takes up the bill. The firm is DeLay's first lobbying client since he stopped lobbying for Argus Global in 2013."

WEST COAST WATCH -- "Jimmy Gomez wins Los Angeles congressional election to replace Xavier Becerra," by L.A. Times' Christine Mai-Duc: "State Assemblyman Jimmy Gomez was elected as Los Angeles' newest member of Congress on Tuesday, defeating attorney Robert Lee Ahn in a sharply contested battle for the 34th Congressional District. Gomez will take the seat vacated by Xavier Becerra, who became state attorney general earlier this year, and will represent one of the poorest, most immigrant-heavy districts in the state, where the effects of President Trump's policies on immigration and healthcare will be acutely felt." <http://lat.ms/2sCrTSe>

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THE RESISTANCE -- "Cuomo and Pelosi rally in push for House seats," by New York Playbooker Jimmy Vielkind: "House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi said she is targeting eight seats in New York in next year's midterm elections, urging several thousand people at a Manhattan rally with Gov. Andrew Cuomo Tuesday to organize for 2018. 'Republicans in Washington are trying to drag our country back, but New York Democrats will lead us forward, armed with the strength of our values,' Pelosi said during an event at the Javits Center. 'There are eight Republican seats we can and must win in November 2018. Defeating in 2018 means laying the foundation for victory right now, and we have a powerful ally in this fight with Governor Andrew Cuomo.'" <http://politi.co/2rTJBD0>

-- THE JOINT APPEARANCE came out of "a desire to bring people together around a common mission statement and give direction on how to mobilize. For the party to be successful in the future, it isn't enough to just put up a resistance, we need to unify around the common goal of taking the House as a first step in 2018. That is concrete and attainable," a Cuomo ally emails.

FUN STORY -- "Vice president's wife installs beehive at official residence," by AP's Darlene Superville: "The new hive has between 15,000 and 20,000 honeybees, said Larry Marling of Eco Honeybees, the Virginia-based company that was hired to install the beehive. The bee population could grow to between 40,000 and 50,000 bees by the end of the season, he said. The bees at the Pence's residence will help the flower and vegetable gardens on the property, where kale, lettuce, tomatoes, herbs and radishes grow. The honey they produce will be given away as gifts."
<http://apne.ws/2r0Lcra>

WOMEN RULE PODCAST: In an interview with former presidential candidate and business woman, Carly Fiorina sits down with POLITICO editor Carrie Budoff Brown to discuss the unique challenges women face when running for public office. "I was scrutinized, caricatured, criticized differently than a man would be." Fiorina also shares her thoughts on Hillary Clinton's loss, "...as much as I did not want her to be president of the United States because of her policy positions, I have empathy for Hillary Clinton." And she has one message to President Trump: Stop tweeting. <http://politi.co/2qW6NN0>
... **Listen and subscribe** <http://apple.co/2p6Tp8l>

POLITICO EUROPE has the latest poll numbers for tomorrow's U.K. Election.
Available for iPhones <http://politi.co/2sl4qN1>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Jennifer Palmieri leaving Yafa Grill by McPherson Square yesterday ... Eric Holder on the Amtrak platform in Newark, waiting for a southbound train ... Kevin McCarthy in the lounge at Trump Hotel last night

OUT AND ABOUT -- Friends of newly appointed POLITICO CEO Patrick Steel - Kristin Mannion and HP Goldfield, Ambassador Capricia Marshall and Dr. Robert Marshall, Diana and Michael Allen - hosted a reception at the newseum toasting Steel's new position on his 30th day on the job. **SPOTTED:** Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Abby Blunt, Ambassador to the Republic of Panama Riviera Gonzalez, UAE Ambassador Yousef al Otaiba, Lee Satterfield, Mack McLarty, Jeremy and Robyn Bash, Peter Scher, Erin Streeter, Liz Robbins, Robert and Elena Allbritton, John Harris, Carrie Budoff Brown, Poppy MacDonald, Susan Glasser, Peter Baker, Tom Donilon, Margaret Carlson, Linda Douglass, Rich White, Michael Tongour, Loran Aiken, Norm Brownstein, Susan Lasalla, Clyde Tuggle, former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) and Rob Chamberlain.

-- FORMER U.S. SEN. JAY ROCKEFELLER (D-W.VA.) celebrated his 80th birthday Tuesday evening at his Rock Creek Park home joined by about 150 of his former staff and friends from his days as two term governor of West Virginia and five terms in the Senate. He was feted with a chocolate cake and happy birthday songs. **SPOTTED:** WVU President Gordon Gee, former chiefs of staff Tamera Luzzatto, Ira Shapiro and Lane Bailey; press secretaries Tim Gay, Scott Widmeyer, Laura Quinn and Linda

Arnold; Patrick Robertson, Norwood Bentley, Jack Canfield, former West Virginia Democratic Party chair George Carenbauer; David Leiter; Ann Harkins.

OUT AND ABOUT IN NYC - NBC News' Lester Holt and Roy Price of Amazon were honored at the annual Museum of the Moving Image dinner in NYC last night. Roy was toasted by Jeffrey Tambor while Lester was toasted by Noah Oppenheim. Pool report: "Lester talked about how something remarkable has happened over the last five months that hasn't happened in his 38 years in journalism: people are thanking journalists. Stopping them in the street to thank them for asking the tough questions. 'There is a renewed sense of appreciation for the role of free and independent journalism in our democracy.'

"He was introduced by NBC News President Noah Oppenheim, who talked about how unflappable Lester is: the higher the stakes the more Lester is at ease. He referenced the presidential debate -- the team was backstage pacing and stress eating, meanwhile Lester was in an adjacent room watching an old Julia Roberts movie. Because 'He does the work, he's always prepared and he knows it.'" **SPOTTED:** Harvey Weinstein at the Amazon table, David Corvo, Liz Cole and Nightly News EP Sam Singal.

TRANSITIONS -- Bravo Group, the largest PR firm in Pennsylvania, is opening a D.C. office, which will be led by senior director **Jessica Ennis**. She's the former political director for the 2016 Rubio campaign and an NRSC, FP1 Strategies, Romney 2012 and RNC alum. ... WaPo alum **Amit Paley** yesterday was named CEO of LGBTQ advocacy group The Trevor Project, the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ youth.

...**Denise Feriozzi** is joining Civitas Public Affairs Group as a principal. She most recently served as the deputy executive director of EMILY's List. <http://politi.co/2s3BS61>
... **Peter Stehouwer** has joined Bayer as deputy director for federal relations and policy. He was previously legislative director for Rep. Billy Long (R-Mo.). He also worked for Michigan Reps. Bill Huizenga and Pete Hoekstra.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Emily Murry

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: conservative columnist **Myra Adams**. How she's celebrating: "Today, husband David and I will be enjoying 'flyover country' bound for San Francisco to celebrate my stepgrandson's third birthday tomorrow and mine too, one day late. My stepson works for Google and when we visit he helps us better utilize our various devices since we were born in ancient times." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2rKU0ys>

BIRTHDAYS: Vice President Mike Pence is 58 ... Elizabeth Eberhardt Thorp, editor-in-chief at PYPO, founder of Poshbrood and a Capitol File alum ... Obama WH alum Keith Maley ... Mick Foley (hat tips: Tracy Sefl and RAINN) ... Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) is 45 ... Rep. Alex Mooney (R-W.Va.) is 46 ... Lizzie Fine ... Tina Dupuy ... Micheál Keane

... Politico's Christina Animashaun ... James Day ... Emily Greenhouse, managing editor at The New Yorker (h/t Jon Haber) ... Lars Anderson, founding partner at BlueDot Strategies and a FEMA alum ... Tracy Schmidt ... Politico Europe's Geoffroy Vitoux ... William Kaplan of Joliet, Ill. ... Matt Borges, former Ohio Republican Party chairman ... Admiral Brian Peterman, U.S Coast Guard (Ret.) (h/ts Ed Cash) ... Alexander Mooney, associate at Gibson, Dunn ... Colyer Woolston ... Ryan Lynch ... Stephanie Reichin, VP at SKDKnickerbocker (h/t Liz DeBold) ...

... **Chris Ortman**, VP of corporate comms at MPAA ... Chicago and Aspen-based billionaire Lester Crown is 92 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Jerry White, CEO of Global Impact Strategies ... Sema Emiroglu ... Franklyn Palau ... Sulome Anderson ... Ryan Tarinelli ... Isaac Luria ... Katie Mulhall ... David Kim is 3-0 ... Danielle Piacente ... Laura Pereyra ... Javier De Diego, supervising producer at CNN, working with Jamie Gangel ... Paul Booth, spending his day watching the fabulous documentary "Heather Booth: Changing the World" ... Katie Boyce ... Eric Tabor ... Eric Blackwell (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Amy Tewes ... Mary Cory ... Bruce Colburn ... Anne Sayers ... Robert Gruber ... Andy Alexander ... Bradley Warren ... Vija Udenans ... Chilli Amar ... Bea González ... Kevin Peraino is 41 ... Josh Jones ... Liam Neeson is 65 ... Bear Grylls is 43 ... actor-comedian Bill Hader is 39 ... Anna Kournikova is 36 ... Iggy Azalea is 27 ... Fetty Wap is 26 (h/ts AP)

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Subject: Here's a resume for a writer and researcher

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EPA
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Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

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By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Good Tuesday morning. Today is the 73rd anniversary of D-Day.

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T GET THE POINT MONDAY MORNING, another statement from President Donald Trump on Twitter at 9:20 p.m. last night: "That's right, we need a TRAVEL BAN for certain DANGEROUS countries, not some politically correct term that won't help us protect our people!"

JEN HABERKORN and **BURGESS EVERETT** scoop that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) wants to vote on replacing Obamacare by the July 4 recess. We even hear that Senate Republicans are starting to send pieces of what might end up in their plan to the Congressional Budget Office.

SURE, A VOTE CAN HAPPEN, but listen to the quotes Burgess and Jen got from Republican senators, and tell us if you hear confidence or skepticism that a bill will pass: **SEN ROY BLUNT (R-MO.):** "I don't think this gets better over time. So my personal view is we've got until now and the Fourth of July to decide if the votes are there or not. And I hope they are." **SEN. SUSAN COLLINS (R-MAINE):** "Just listening to the debate over the past few weeks, I think cobbling together a bill that could get 50 votes is going to be a challenge, but you never know." **A PERSON FAMILIAR WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS:** "[McConnell] wants to be done with this one way or the other." ***Read Jen and Burgess's great story*** <http://politi.co/2rOT6mH>

FYI -- There are, at most, 19 legislative days between now and the July 4 recess.

IMPORTANT READ -- SEUNG MIN KIM -- "How Trump is stalling his own nominees": "Trump tapped Kevin McAleenan on March 30 to lead Customs and Border Protection, a critical position for his drive to revamp U.S. immigration policy. But the White House didn't formally submit his nomination to the Senate for confirmation until May 22, nearly eight weeks later. ... Trump's two nominees for the Export-Import Bank board -- ex-GOP Reps. Scott Garrett and Spencer Bachus -- haven't been submitted to the Senate, despite being named April 14. Trump rolled out a batch of 10 judicial nominations to much fanfare on May 8, but two of them have yet to arrive on Capitol Hill. And Dan Brouillette, nominated by Trump to be Rick Perry's chief deputy at the Energy Department, was announced on April 3, yet his nomination wasn't sent by the White House until May 16." <http://politi.co/2rGV9Y9>

NYT'S PETER BAKER and MAGGIE HABERMAN -- "Trump Grows Discontented With Attorney General Jeff Sessions": "Few Republicans were quicker to embrace President Trump's campaign last year than Jeff Sessions, and his reward was one of the most prestigious jobs in America. But more than four months into his presidency, Mr. Trump has grown sour on Mr. Sessions, now his attorney general, blaming him for various troubles that have plagued the White House. ...

"[Trump] has intermittently fumed for months over Mr. Sessions's decision to recuse himself from the investigation into Russian meddling in last year's election, according to people close to Mr. Trump who insisted on anonymity to describe internal conversations. In Mr. Trump's view, they said, it was that recusal that eventually led to the appointment of a special counsel who took over the investigation." <http://nyti.ms/2r1d7m6>

-- IMAGINE IF YOU'RE SESSIONS and gave up a safe Senate seat you held for 20 years -- and could've held for 20 more -- only to work for a president who became frustrated with you after five months on the job.

BRUTAL WSJ EDITORIAL -- "The Buck Stops Everywhere Else: Trump undermines his own travel ban and Justice Department": "Some people with a propensity for self-destructive behavior can't seem to help themselves, President Trump apparently among them. Over the weekend and into Monday he indulged in another cycle of Twitter outbursts and pointless personal feuding that may damage his agenda and the powers of the Presidency. ...

"In other words, in 140-character increments, Mr. Trump diminished his own standing by causing a minor international incident, demonstrated that the loyalty he demands of the people who work for him isn't reciprocal, set back his policy goals and wasted time that he could have devoted to health care, tax reform or 'infrastructure week.' Mark it all down as further evidence that the most effective opponent of the Trump Presidency is Donald J. Trump." <http://on.wsj.com/2qSeSTv>

NOT WELCOME -- THE GUARDIAN: "Cancel Donald Trump state visit, says Sadiq

Khan, after London attack tweets: London mayor says US president is wrong about many things and that state visit to Britain should not go ahead": "Appearing on Channel 4 News on Monday evening, Khan said Trump was wrong about 'many things' and that his state visit should not go ahead.

"I don't think we should roll out the red carpet to the president of the USA in the circumstances where his policies go against everything we stand for,' he said. 'When you have a special relationship it is no different from when you have got a close mate. You stand with them in times of adversity but you call them out when they are wrong. There are many things about which Donald Trump is wrong.'" <http://bit.ly/2sbLLy4>

THE RUNDOWN -- WHAT TV WILL LOOK LIKE THURSDAY FOR THE COMEY HEARING -- Nearly every network is taking the Jim Comey hearing Thursday morning live. **CBS:** Charlie Rose, Gayle King and Norah O'Donnell with John Dickerson and Jan Crawford. **ABC:** George Stephanopoulos (h/t Morning Media). **FOX NEWS:** Bill Hemmer and Shannon Bream. **CNN:** Wolf Blitzer and Anderson Cooper. (CNN.com will also livestream Comey's testimony without requiring a log-in to a cable provider.)

#THISTOWN -- @marincogan: "Shaw's Tavern, a bar in DC, is opening early Thursday morning to carry live coverage of the Comey hearing:" <http://bit.ly/2rw8xQ9>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "Top-secret NSA report details Russian hacking effort days before 2016 election," by the Intercept's Matthew Cole, Richard Esposito, Sam Biddle and Ryan Grim: "Russian military intelligence executed a cyberattack on at least one U.S. voting software supplier and sent spear-phishing emails to more than 100 local election officials just days before last November's presidential election, according to a highly classified intelligence report obtained by The Intercept. The top-secret National Security Agency document, which was provided anonymously to The Intercept and independently authenticated, analyzes intelligence very recently acquired by the agency about a months-long Russian intelligence cyber effort against elements of the U.S. election and voting infrastructure.

"The report, dated May 5, 2017, is the most detailed U.S. government account of Russian interference in the election that has yet come to light. While the document provides a rare window into the NSA's understanding of the mechanics of Russian hacking, it does not show the underlying 'raw' intelligence on which the analysis is based. A U.S. intelligence officer who declined to be identified cautioned against drawing too big a conclusion from the document because a single analysis is not necessarily definitive." <http://bit.ly/2syN2Nm>

-- "Contractor charged in NSA document leak case," by WaPo's Devlin Barrett: "A 25-year-old government contractor has been charged with mishandling classified information after authorities say she gave a top-secret National Security Agency document to a news -organization. Reality Leigh Winner was accused of gathering, transmitting or losing defense information - the first criminal charge filed in a leak investigation during the Trump administration." <http://wapo.st/2sMl1jt>

-- @RonaldKlain: "Fair to condemn the leak. But also fair to ask: Was the admin going to tell us that NSA had proof of Russian hack of voting systems?"

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung has announced more than \$10 Billion in US Growth since 2016, including our March 2017 acquisition of HARMAN International, a commitment of \$1.2 Billion in U.S.-based IoT Investment and R&D, and a \$1B expansion of our Austin, TX Semiconductor Manufacturing Facility. Visit Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

TELL US HOW YOU REALLY FEEL! -- " Trump's legislative director acknowledges Russia is overwhelming his agenda," by Matt Nussbaum and John Bresnahan:

"There's no doubt that keeping members focused on investigations detracts from our legislative agenda, detracts from what we're trying to deliver for the American people," said Marc Short, Trump's director of legislative affairs, in a briefing with reporters on Monday night." <http://politi.co/2r0Tomv>

WAR ROOM, WHAT WAR ROOM? -- "White House ices Russia war room idea," by Tara Palmeri, Josh Dawsey, and Eliana Johnson: "The White House's Russia investigation 'war room' may have been killed before the battle. Just days before former FBI director James Comey's Senate testimony about his firing, President Donald Trump decided that all inquiries related to the scandals engulfing his administration should be handled by his outside lawyer in New York instead of by a team based inside the White House, according to four advisors close to Trump." <http://politi.co/2sbW5pR>

GOOD EAR -- "In Trump's White House, Everything's Coming in 'Two Weeks,'" by Bloomberg's Toluse Olorunnipa: "President Donald Trump has a plan. It'll be ready in two weeks. From overhauling the tax code to releasing an infrastructure package to making decisions on NAFTA and the Paris climate agreement, Trump has a common refrain: A big announcement is coming in just 'two weeks.' It rarely does. On February 9, Trump boasted that his administration was 'way ahead of schedule' on a tax overhaul. 'We're going to be announcing something I would say over the next two or three weeks that will be phenomenal in terms of tax and developing our aviation infrastructure,' Trump said while meeting with airline executives. Eleven weeks elapsed before the White House released a one-page outline of the tax plan.

"In an April 29 interview on 'CBS This Morning' Trump said of his promised \$1 trillion infrastructure construction program: 'We've got the plan largely completed and we'll be filing over the next two or three weeks - maybe sooner,' Trump said. No legislation has been filed. ... Trump's habit of self-imposing -- then missing -- two-week deadlines for major announcements has become a staple of his administration as it's struggled to amass policy wins. The president has used two-week timelines to sidestep questions from reporters or brag to CEOs at the White House. But his pronouncements have also flummoxed investors, Congress and occasionally even members of his staff."
<https://bloom.bg/2rP1hja>

THIS IS FASCINATING -- NYT'S STEVE EDER and BEN PROTESS -- "Trump Organization to Go Budget Friendly With 'American Idea' Hotel Chain": "The Trump Organization is expected to announce plans for a new three-star hotel chain with a patriotic flair, echoing President Trump's campaign slogan about putting America first and reflecting the organization's promise to enter into new deals only in the United States. The intention is to differentiate the chain, called American Idea, by featuring artifacts of American culture in the hotels, such as an old Coca-Cola machine in the lobby or American-made sundries in the rooms.

"And while the Trump Organization and its business partner say the down-market move is not about politics, the president's business is inherently viewed through that lens: The chain will make its debut in little-known towns in Mississippi, a state in the heart of Trump country that favored him over Hillary Clinton by a margin of 18 percentage points. The organization's business partner in Mississippi is a family-owned hotel company whose co-owner met Mr. Trump at a campaign event last summer and donated to his campaign." <http://nyti.ms/2rMLbXa>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- SNEAK PEEK OF ISAAC DOVERE'S "OFF MESSAGE" -- SBA'S MCMAHON BLAMES WEST WING FOR HIRING 'BOTTLENECK' -- While President Trump is back to complaining about Democrats somehow are holding up his nominees, his longtime friend and Small Business Administrator Linda McMahon says she's been dealing with a "bottleneck" in the West Wing that's kept her from staffing up and slowed down her work. "We're not even staffed up to where we need to be or where we were, to do a lot of our regular activities," McMahon told Isaac in Tuesday's episode of the "Off Message" podcast.

"Some of them are filled with acting people who are here and who are doing a good job," McMahon said. "But until you have that leader in that position who can really manage and evaluate the work that's been done, you do have a little bit of a time gap there." McMahon, who says in the podcast that the job she originally wanted was Commerce secretary, said she's probably done with running for office, but she's also probably still going to keep writing big checks to Republicans and GOP causes-as much as the ethics rules allow her to.

And on the political future of one of her old employees -Dovere asked her if there was a world she could imagine in which there's a President The Rock? "Listen, there are worlds that I think happen and you wouldn't imagine that they had happened," McMahon said. "But it's not one I think about. I'm in current day. I'm very happy with the president that we have, and I want to do everything I can to help him be successful." <http://politi.co/2rP2tCZ>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Senate prods Trump to move Israeli embassy to Jerusalem," by Elana Schor: "The Senate overwhelmingly agreed on Monday night to nudge President Donald Trump to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a campaign promise that he punted on last week. The Senate voted 90-0 on a resolution marking the 50th anniversary of Jerusalem's reunification. The measure

includes language that 'calls upon the president and all United States officials to abide by' a 1995 law that urged then-President Bill Clinton to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem." <http://politi.co/2rG7Q5n>

THE JUICE ...

-- **THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS** is playing host to Vice President Mike Pence, House Speaker Paul Ryan and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy June 20-21 for its annual fly in.

-- **SPOTTED: ROGER STONE** at the Watergate Hotel Monday, just days before the 45th anniversary of the Watergate break-in June 17.

-- **ABC'S TOM LLAMAS'** interview with Eric and Donald Trump Jr. will run on "Good Morning America" this morning. Look for the Trumps to discuss their father's tweets about London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

THREE PLAYBOOK FIRST LOOKS -- Members of Congress & Bad News Babes Walk-Up Songs Contest for the Congressional Women's Softball Game (CWSG) have selected their own walk-up song for their at-bat during the game. Some notable walk-up song selections include: Rep. Mia Love (R-Utah) with Pour Some Sugar On Me by Def Leppard; Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) with Bo\$\$ by Fifth Harmony; Vice News' Shawna Thomas with Flawless by Beyonce; Cook Political Report's Amy Walter with All I Do Is Win by DJ Khaled, Feat. T-Pain. Ludacris; and NBC's Kasie Hunt with Enter Sandman by Metallica. For the next two weeks fans will vote on who has the better Spotify playlist of walk up songs. <http://bit.ly/2sbTEE1>

--**REPUBLICAN KAREN HANDEL** is out with a tough new 30-second ad in the Georgia special election with a veteran on-camera saying "I fought for our country. Jon Ossoff hired a film crew." It also dings Ossoff for allegedly exaggerating his security clearance and says he "is not fit to serve in Congress." They say they are spending \$500,000 plus on the ad, titled "Front Line." **See the ad** <http://bit.ly/2rGMTqW>

-- **MICHAEL MOORE** is launching a new secure website called TrumpiLeaks. He writes in a letter being sent this morning: "Patriotic Americans in government, law enforcement or the private sector with knowledge of crimes, breaches of public trust and misconduct committed by Donald J. Trump and his associates are needed to blow the whistle in the name of protecting the United States of America from tyranny." Last month, the Weinstein Company announced they were teaming up with Moore again to release a new film by him: "Fahrenheit 11/9," referring to the day Trump was officially declared the next president. **The site** <http://bit.ly/2syY59a> ... **The letter** <http://politi.co/2qSHwnn>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- The president is meeting first with National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, then House and Senate leadership and then he'll have a dinner with members of Congress tonight. **Our scoop on the dinner guests**
<http://politi.co/2rGXFh5>

Playbook Reads

<https://bloom.bg/2sMVwzH> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2rwerkj>

SHOW ME THE MONEY -- "Ryan ramps up fundraising to protect the House after healthcare vote," by Rachael Bade: "Speaker Paul Ryan, eager to protect his House majority in what's expected to be a politically volatile election cycle, is stepping up his fundraising following the chamber's vote to repeal and replace Obamacare. The Wisconsin Republican's political team on Tuesday morning will announce that Ryan has raised \$22 million for House Republicans in the first five months of 2017, setting him on track to far outpace his 2016 fundraising haul. Over the same period last year, an election year, Ryan hauled in \$16.5 million." <http://politi.co/2rZ13GZ>

WHO'S ON MUELLER'S TEAM, from Darren Samuelsohn. <http://politi.co/2rP3tqW>

WEST COAST WATCH -- "California's new top cop has to make some big policing decisions soon. No one knows what he'll do," by L.A. Times' Liam Dillon: <http://lat.ms/2sMk3Vp>

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years, and we announced more than \$10 Billion in US Growth since 2016. This year, we're proud to have added HARMAN International and its 3,500 U.S. employees to the Samsung workforce in America, and just as enthusiastic about our common vision, the similarities in our culture of innovation, and the added value we can create for customers. Learn more about our partnership at Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow for more. *****

MEDIAWATCH -- "WSJ Ends Google Users' Free Ride, Then Fades in Search Results," by Bloomberg's Gerry Smith: "After blocking Google users from reading free articles in February, the Wall Street Journal's subscription business soared, with a fourfold increase in the rate of visitors converting into paying customers. But there was a trade-off: Traffic from Google plummeted 44 percent. The reason: Google search results are based on an algorithm that scans the internet for free content. After the Journal's free articles went behind a paywall, Google's bot only saw the first few paragraphs and started ranking them lower, limiting the Journal's viewership. Executives at the Journal, owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., argue that Google's policy is unfairly punishing them for trying to attract more digital subscribers. They want Google to treat their articles equally in search rankings, despite being behind a paywall." <https://bloom.bg/2sbPknW>

- **"Led by Rachel Maddow, MSNBC Surges to Unfamiliar Spot: No. 1 in Prime Time,"** by NYT's Mike Grynbaum: "The last time that MSNBC was No. 1 in prime-time cable news, Bill Clinton was president, Madonna led the Billboard charts and 'Friends' still ran new episodes on TV. Seventeen years and a few rebrandings later, the network is back on top - buoyed by a surge of interest in news and the channel's stable of reliably liberal anchors, like Rachel Maddow, who have found their groove amid a time of intense anxiety for the political left. The MSNBC resurgence -- in May, it beat its rivals for the highest prime-time viewership on weeknights in the critical 25-to-54 age demographic, up an astounding 118 percent from a year earlier -- is part of a newly shifting landscape in television news, and within the channel itself."

<http://nyti.ms/2rGykE1>

--**"Eric Bolling Signs Multiyear Contract to Remain at Fox News"** - TVNewser:

<http://bit.ly/2qWS0pY>

-- **DANA BASH'S NEW PROJECT: CNN'S BADASS WOMEN OF WASHINGTON --**

From Dana: "I was sitting at lunch with colleagues in early 2017 discussing the election, Hillary Clinton's loss and what that meant for women. That conversation inspired what became a project I am incredibly proud of - CNN's Badass Women of Washington. Women all across this city are breaking barriers, shattering glass ceilings and making a difference in government. Today, we are launching this inspirational series about seven powerhouse women: Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Transportation Sec. Elaine Chao, Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, RNC Chairman Ronna Romney McDaniel, Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, and Army Surgeon General, Lt. Gen. Nadja West. I hope you take some time to watch uplifting stories about and lessons from these women." **The project** <http://cnn.it/2rOk1z5>

HAPPENING TONIGHT -- PLAYBOOK UNIVERSITY with **D.C. MAYOR MURIEL BOWSER** -- Join us tonight for our inaugural Playbook University event with the mayor of Washington. We'll talk about the changing face of D.C., the city's politics and Washington in the era of Donald Trump. The event is at IN3, the Inclusive Innovation Incubator at 2301 Georgia Avenue, NW. **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2ruwqbl>

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, Rep. John Delaney (D-Md.), Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Christine Brennan last night at the Kennedy Center for a Night of Laughter & Song benefitting the David Lynch Foundation.

SPOTTED at Al Franken's book party yesterday evening in Georgetown at Mandy Grunwald's home to celebrate "Al Franken, Giant of the Senate": Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Norm Ornstein,

Howard Fineman, Andrea Mitchell, Kasie Hunt and Mark Leibovich. **\$17.09 on Amazon**
<http://amzn.to/2rOKhtf>

--POOL REPORT FROM TONY COELHO's 75th BIRTHDAY: "Former U.S. Congressman, DCCC chair, House Majority Whip and Gore 2000 campaign chairman, Tony Coelho (D-Calif.), celebrated his 75th birthday last night with friends, his DCCC and Congressional family which included a toast from Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.), a former Coelho intern. Coelho was DCCC chair following his freshman year term in the House and won back 26 seats for the House Democrats in 1982, saving Tip O'Neil's speakership (MSNBC's Chris Matthews, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe and former Deputy Sec. of State Tom Nides are staff alumni of Coelho's DCCC days). Coelho told the story of meeting real estate developer Donald Trump on a fundraising swing through New York City and getting a \$5,000 contribution from Trump for the House Democrats' campaign committee that year."

SPOTTED: Fred Hatfield, Marty Franks, Vic Fazio, Rep. Jim Costa, Tom O'Donnell, Ed Berger, Tom King, Stan Brand, Melissa Maxman, John Boland, Barbara Merrill, Jim Free, Ron Wick, Jonathan Young, Brad Triebsch, Michael Fraioli, Michael LaRosa, Joyce Bender, Mary Brougner and many others.

AT THE WATERGATE -- The Atlantic's Steve Clemons hosted a dinner last night on what it takes to get the "right healthy balance between players in an economy" in the glass-surrounded Library of the Watergate Hotel. **SPOTTED:** Laura Tyson, Grover Norquist, Josh Eastright, Tara McKelvey, Craig Gordon, Richard Vague, Steve Glickman, Marilyn Geewax, Kathleen Biden, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), John Lettieri, Javier Palomarez, Brian Fung, Shilpi Niyogi, Eleanor Clift, Peter Morici, former Rep. Barton Gordon, Joseph Gagnon, Andy Green, Allan Mendelowitz, Kristin Sharp, Jeff Carneal and Christopher Colford.

TRANSITIONS - OBAMA ALUMNI -- **Daniel Watson** has joined the Glover Park Group as a VP, working primarily on the financial services team. He most recently served as deputy assistant secretary for public affairs at Treasury. <http://politi.co/2qWXcdv> ... **Nihal Krishan** has joined Global Competition Review to cover the world of antitrust via the FTC, DOJ and the courts. He was previously a political correspondent for Sinclair Broadcast Group's Circa News and a Washington Correspondent for PBS Arizona.

... **Kurt Pickhardt** has joined Go Big Media as VP for digital strategies. He worked the 2016 cycle as the director of client strategy at Targeted Victory. **Ashley Harvey** has joined the firm as manager of client accounts. She most recently was director of operations for direct mail firm Direct Edge Campaigns.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- **Sarah Peck**, communications director for Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), and **Jonathan Elsasser**, who's joining Hogan Lovells in D.C. this fall, got married at the University of Virginia Chapel in Charlottesville this weekend. Pool report from Amy Dudley: "Sarah and Jonathan met as undergrads at UVA and Jonathan just graduated from UVA Law. During the ceremony, Sen. Tim Kaine read a passage from

Paul's letter to the Romans ['Love must be sincere']. The reception was held at Panorama Farms, with a cocktail hour overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains and dancing in a barn to a Motown band. They capped off the night with an afterparty featuring DC's favorite 90's band White Ford Bronco." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2rG5x21> ... <http://bit.ly/2qWHvCO> ... <http://bit.ly/2sMOpqT>

SPOTTED: Tim Kaine, Kip Wainscott, Brandi Hoffine Barr, Lily Adams, Kate McCarroll, John Harris and Ann O'Hanlon.

-- **Shripal Shah** married **Megan Kudchadkar** on Saturday in Hauppauge, New York, which is very close to the bride's hometown of Bayport on the south shore of Long Island. Shah is the vice president of American Bridge 21st Century, a Democratic super PAC, and Kudchadkar is a second-grade science teacher at KIPP DC's Heights Academy in Anacostia. **Instapics** h/t @DameEdwards, the couple's photographer: <http://bit.ly/2rvX57g> ... <http://bit.ly/2r0REcY> **SPOTTED:** Parita Shah and Pete Selfridge, Jon Davidson, Amanda Anderson and Matt McNally, Maya Rao and Michael Schrum, Robert Diznoff, Brian McKeon and Harrell Kirstein and Emily Cashman.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: former House Majority Leader **Eric Cantor**, now vice chairman and managing director with investment bank Moelis, is 54, celebrating on a business trip in Singapore. He's currently reading "American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House," by Jon Meacham. "Appropriate for the times," he told us. Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2rGwJOW>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Bob Kraft turned 76 (hat tip: Jewish Insider)

BIRTHDAYS: Sarah Klein ... "Today" show's Natalie Morales is 45 ... Michael Goldfarb of Orion Strategies, celebrating on D-Day ... No Labels senior adviser Margaret Kimbrell (hat tips: Dennis Craig and Jon Haber) ... Max Docksey, political director at the Ohio GOP ... Bloomberg White House reporter Justin Sink is 3-0 (h/ts Josh Lederman and Roberta Rampton) ... Christopher Rowland, Washington bureau chief for the Boston Globe, member of Gridiron (h/ts Annie Linskey and Nancy Cook) ... Carlie, daughter of Mika Brzezinski ... documentarian Abby Ginzberg ... Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) is 65 ... Anna Epstein, senior director at Black Rock Group, a Carly and RNC alum and the pride of Tulane, is 26 (h/t Carla Frank) ... former Rep. David Bonior (D-Mich.) is 72 ... Matt Heinz ... Ariel Edwards-Levy, polling director for HuffPost (h/ts John Celock) ... Regina LaBelle ... Meredith Barnett, celebrating with Daniel and the kids in NYC (h/ts Teddy, Connor, and Blair) ... Jocelyn White Martin ... Heritage's Rob Kuhlman ... Eli Broad, billionaire, art collector and philanthropist and the only person to create two Fortune 500 companies in two industries, is 84 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Kelly Polce ... Felicia Sonmez, a WSJ, AFP and WashPost alum now a Blakemore fellow studying Chinese at Tsinghua University ... NBC News PR's Farrin Jay (h/t Rachel Zuckerman) ... AIPAC's Allie Freedman ...

... **Chris Pack**, comms director for American Crossroads and SLF. "He is a huge Buffalo Bills fan even though it's a great source of stress in his life." (h/t Katie Martin) ... Heather

McGhee, president of progressive think tank Demos (h/t Kelley McCormick) ... Politico alum Jay Westcott, now a photojournalist for the News & Advance in Lynchburg, Va. ... Josh Taylor ... Sarah Gadsden, associate at Eagle Hill Consulting and an NBC News alum ... ABC News' Katherine Faulders ... Jonathan Kopp, managing director and chief interactive strategist at Glover Park Group ... Amanda Muñoz-Temple ... CNN's Kevin Liptak ... Donna Fenn ... Ben Keesey ... Marlene English ... Brett Caplice ... Ben Holzer ... Bloomberg BNA's Keith Perine ... EY's Jen Hemmerdinger ... Linda Krantz ... Karen Campbell ... Lester Pines ... Carol Guensburg ... Katie Visco ... Emily Henehan Murry ... Tessa Ruby Harnden, daughter of Toby ... Reed Werner ... Trevor B. Whitestone, son of Randall Baker Whitestone ... SMU's Joshua Rovner is 41 ... Travis Brock ... Jane Caplan ... Amy Tewes ... Mary Cory ... Bruce Colburn ... Anne Sayers, celebrating by dancing, bowling and singing karaoke (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... playwright-actor Harvey Fierstein is 65 ... International Tennis Hall of Famer Bjorn Borg is 61 ... Paul Giamatti is 5-0 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Samsung:** Samsung's footprint in the U.S. has been growing for nearly 40 years, and we announced more than \$10 Billion in US Growth since 2016. This year, we're proud to have added HARMAN International and its 3,500 U.S. employees to the Samsung workforce in America, and just as enthusiastic about our common vision, the similarities in our culture of innovation, and the added value we can create for customers. Learn more about our partnership at Samsung.com/VisionForTomorrow. *****

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From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Sun 6/4/2017 3:08:12 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: THE LATEST on London -- President Trump says 'we must stop being politically correct' -- SUNDAY BEST -- OBAMAS dine at Mirabelle, TED CRUZ hangs out at PRINCETON reunion -- B'DAY: Mike Murphy

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by Morgan Stanley
06/04/2017 11:05 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT -- THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO LONDON

ATTACKS -- @realDonaldTrump at 7:17 p.m.: "We need to be smart, vigilant and tough. We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!" ... **at 7:24 p.m.:** "Whatever the United States can do to help out in London and the U. K., we will be there - WE ARE WITH YOU. GOD BLESS!" ...

... **at 7:19 a.m.:** "We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people. If we don't get smart it will only get worse" ... **at 7:31 a.m.:** "At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is 'no reason to be alarmed!'" ... **at 7:43 a.m.:** "Do you notice we are not having a gun debate right now? That's because they used knives and a truck!"

LONDON MAYOR SADIQ KHAN responds, through a spokesman saying he has better things to do than respond to Trump's "ill-informed tweet." <http://bit.ly/2rpMGKp>

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW -- NYT'S STEVEN ERLANGER IN LONDON: "Declaring 'enough is enough,' Prime Minister Theresa May vowed on Sunday a sweeping review of Britain's counterterrorism strategy after three knife-wielding assailants unleashed an assault late Saturday night, the third major terrorist attack in the country in three months.

"Seven people were killed in the attack and dozens more injured as the men sped across London Bridge in a white van, ramming numerous pedestrians, before emerging with large hunting knives for a stabbing spree in the capital's Borough Market, a popular and crowded night spot. The assault came days before national elections this week and after the British government had downgraded the threat level to 'severe' from 'critical,' meaning that an attack was likely, but not imminent." <http://nyti.ms/2rpKkuY>

-- **AP** at 8:10 a.m.: "LONDON (AP) - UK police say they have arrested 12 people in east London over London Bridge attack."

U.K. P.M. THERESA MAY'S Sunday morning statement. <http://bit.ly/2rpFOww>

--**CHECK OUT** the latest version of Politico Europe's Sunday Crunch newsletter which typically covers British politics but today is devoted to the terror attack
<http://politi.co/2ssBbQN>

THE GUARDIAN -- "WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR" -- "Seven people have been killed during attacks in two closely connected areas of London on Saturday night which police have described as 'terrorist incidents' ... Armed police arrived at the scene and shot dead three attackers who were armed with knives and wearing what turned out to be fake bomb vests. The incidents took place on London Bridge and in nearby Borough Market. ... There were multiple casualties in addition to the deaths, with London Ambulance Service saying at least 48 people have been taken to five hospitals in the capital." <http://bit.ly/2ryqtbb>

THE PRESIDENT is at his golf club in Virginia this morning.

FROM THE WEST WING -- The president is dining with members of Congress Tuesday night.

SNEAK PEEK -- NBC NEWS' "SUNDAY NIGHT WITH MEGYN KELLY" with **VLADIMIR PUTIN** -- **KELLY**: "He came over for a dinner, a photo of which has been widely circulated in the American media. What was the nature of your relationship with him?" **PUTIN**: "You and I, you and I personally, have a much closer relationship than I had with Mr. Flynn. You and I met yesterday evening. You and I have been working together all day today. And now, we're meeting again. When I came to the event for our company, Russia Today, and sat down at the table, next to me there was a gentleman sitting on one side. I made my speech. Then we talked about other stuff. And I got up and left. And then afterwards I was told, 'You know there was an American gentleman, he was involved in some things. He used to be in the security services.' That's it. I didn't even really talk to him. That's the extent of my acquaintance with Mr. Flynn."

SUNDAY BEST -- JAKE TAPPER talks to **SEN. MARK WARNER (D-VA.)** on **CNN'S "STATE OF THE UNION"** -- **TAPPER**: "The British prime minister, Theresa May, said there's far too much tolerance for extremism in the U.K. Do you think we have that problem here in the United States?" **WARNER**: "I think we don't have it the same way as the U.K., but it's obviously a challenge in modern society to maintain free societies and freedom of speech, but still recognize that we have to be on guard against some the hateful venom that is oftentimes spewed over the Internet." **TAPPER**: "Why do you think it is that we see these attacks in London, but we haven't, knock on wood, seen such a thing happen here in the United States?"

WARNER: "I believe, in many ways, the Muslim-American community is better integrated into our society. They -- I think that's always been our secret sauce in America, that you can come here, first generation, and if you accept our laws and rules, become American."

TAPPER: "Prime Minister May also said that she thinks Internet-based technology firms are giving extremism the safe space it needs to breed. She wants new regulations of cyberspace. ... Facebook, Twitter, Google, do you think that these tech firms are doing enough?"

WARNER: "Jake, I think -- and my background, as you know, was in technology business before I came in -- went into politics. I think we do have to reexamine these platform companies that, for years, have said they have no responsibility to curate the information that flows across their platforms. They have started to change. Originally, they changed their policies as related to child pornography. Now they're changing their policies as related to terrorism. I was just out on the West Coast last week talking with folks at Facebook. They're now recognizing the weaponization of false information, even around elections. They shut down 30,000 fake accounts right before the French elections. But this is going to require, I think, a much broader conversation than we've had to date."

-- **GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS** talks to **FORMER U.N. AMBASSADOR SUSAN RICE** on **ABC'S "THIS WEEK"** -- **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "On Friday, President Putin also continued to deny that his government has interfered in our elections. But he did for the first time say it might have been done by patriotic Russians. Is that as close to an admission of guilt we're going to get from President Putin?" **RICE:** "I don't know what we'll hear from President Putin, George. But frankly, he's lying. The reality is, as all of our intelligence agencies have come together to affirm with high confidence, the Russian government, at the highest levels, was behind the very unprecedented effort to meddle in our 2016 presidential election. And we need to understand exactly how and why that happened and whether or not there's any evidence to suggest that there were those on the American side who facilitated that meddling."

-- **STEPHANOPOULOS** talks to **EPA ADMINISTRATOR SCOTT PRUITT** -- **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "But so, a pretty simple question, why can't the president just say whether or not he believes in man-made climate change? You speak for the president. You're the EPA administrator. Do you know what the president believes?" **PRUITT:** "Well, frankly, George, I think the whole question is an effort to get it off the point and the issue of whether Paris is good for this country or not. And the president has indicated the climate changes." ... **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "I want to move on. But just very simply, do you -- do you know if President Trump still believes that climate change is a hoax?" **PRUITT:** "Our discussion, George, has been about the agreement, the efficacy of the agreement. That's what he spent the last several weeks focused upon, the merits and demerits of the Paris agreement. He put America first. He said that he's going to put jobs, and the environment first by the way, by making the decision that he did on Thursday."

HOT CLICK -- Former Secretary of State John Kerry tells NBC News' Chuck Todd on "Meet the Press" that Trump seeking a better climate deal is like O.J. Simpson searching for the real killer. <http://nbcnews.to/2rG1bKC>

-- **@FoxNewsSunday**: ".@AlGore on @POTUS' withdrawing from #ParisDeal: I thought it was in our best interest to stay in. It was reckless & indefensible decision."

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Morgan Stanley helped All Aboard Florida raise capital to bring Brightline, an express railway, to the Sunshine State-potentially cutting travel time across Southern Florida by up to 25-30% versus existing options. Investing in infrastructure isn't just good for people-it can be good for cities. Learn more at morganstanley.com/brightline. *****

WHAT JAKE IS READING -- THE LEGISLATIVE ITEM OF THE WEEK -- "Trump plans week-long focus on infrastructure, starting with privatizing air traffic control," by WaPo's John Wagner: "President Trump will seek to put a spotlight on his vows to privatize the nation's air traffic control system and spur \$1 trillion in new investment in roads, waterways and other infrastructure with a weeklong series of events starting Monday at the White House. The events -- billed as 'infrastructure week' -- are part of a stepped-up effort since the president's return a week ago from his first foreign trip to show that the White House remains focused on its agenda, despite cascading headlines about investigations into his administration's ties to Russia.

"The president has invited executives from major airlines to join him as he kicks off the week with one of his more controversial plans: spinning off the air traffic control functions of the Federal Aviation Administration to a nonprofit corporation. It's an idea that's been tried many times before dating back to the Clinton administration and most recently last year in legislation championed by Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), chairman of the House Transportation Committee. His bill never made it to the Senate, where several key GOP members resisted the idea of transferring government assets to a corporation." <http://wapo.st/2ryRcVo>

THE BUSY SEASON... When Congress returns this week, it will have 31 days in session before breaking for the month-long August recess. Capitol Hill denizens are bracing for a long two months.

THE VEEP -- THE LATEST ON HEALTH CARE -- "Mike Pence rides a Harley in Iowa, presses for action on health care reform," by Des Moines Register's Jason Noble in Boone, Iowa: "On stage, the vice president ticked through President Donald Trump's efforts since taking office on regulatory reform, defense spending, confronting immigration and limiting funding for abortion. But he devoted the bulk of his remarks to pressing for action on the GOP health care reform law that passed the U.S. House this spring but has seen slower progress in the Senate. 'First and foremost, this summer, this Congress must come together and heed the president's leadership and we must repeal and replace Obamacare,' Pence told a crowd about 1,400 on a hot, windswept

field on the Central Iowa Expo grounds here." <http://dmreg.co/2qUswEx>

RACHAEL BADE in San Juan Capistrano, California -- "Issa walks fine line at town hall in divided district": "During a Saturday morning town hall here in an affluent Southern Californian neighborhood, [John] Matthews lit into the nine-term Republican congressman for failing to do more to stop Russia's interference with the 2016 election. 'I want to know when you and the Republican Party are going to stand up, use your political capital, and recognize that our democracy is under attack from an adversary,' he asked Issa. The crowd cheered, and raised yellow signs reading 'Agree.'

"Issa -- who just minutes earlier had boasted about being the first Republican to ask Attorney General Jeff Sessions to recuse himself from the FBI's Russia investigation - retorted that Russia wasn't a Republican problem at all. He argued it was a bipartisan nuisance, and claimed he's been tough on what he called the 'evil empire' of Russia his entire career. As the audience jeered at Issa to 'Stand up! Stand up!' against President Donald Trump, and 'revoke' the security clearance of Jared Kushner, his son in law, Matthews said that he would not vote for Issa again." <http://politi.co/2qUf97t>

SPOTTED -- BARACK AND MICHELLE OBAMA dining in the private room at 16th Street hotspot Mirabelle Saturday night ... **SEN. TED CRUZ (R-TEXAS)** at his 25th Princeton reunion over the weekend. He debated his college debate partner, David Panton, Friday. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2sDSg9J> Cruz was holding down the fort in the Hyatt Regency in Princeton until at least 2:30 a.m.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Armed police officers arrive at The Shard in the London Bridge quarter in London on June 4 following a terror attack. | Niklas Halle'n/AFP/Getty

LURCHING TO THE LEFT -- "The Single-Payer Party? Democrats Shift Left on Health Care," by Alex Burns and Jennifer Medina on A1 of the NYT: "For years, Republicans savaged Democrats for supporting the Affordable Care Act, branding the law - with some rhetorical license -- as a government takeover of health care. Now, cast out of power in Washington and most state capitals, Democrats and activist leaders seeking political redemption have embraced an unlikely-seeming cause: an actual government takeover of health care." <http://nyti.ms/2qPMyVA>

ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER -- "The Trump administration's lonely voice for human rights," by Nahal Toosi: "When President Donald Trump told an audience of Muslim leaders last month that America will no longer 'lecture' their countries on internal matters, it sent the clearest signal yet that his administration plans to downplay human rights. But one of his Cabinet aides apparently wasn't listening. Nikki Haley, Trump's ambassador to the United Nations, has pointedly made human rights, along with

humanitarian assistance, a central focus of her agenda, putting her at odds with Trump as well as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. It's a stance that puts her credibility at risk if she can't deliver on her rhetoric, but one that also could prove politically smart by letting her distance herself from Trump's record if the former South Carolina governor seeks higher office." <http://politi.co/2qU6fXA>

DEEP DIVE -- "How a 'shadow' universe of charities joined with political warriors to fuel Trump's rise," by WaPo's Robert O'Harrow Jr. and Shawn Boburg: "The Freedom Center has declared itself a 'School for Political Warfare,' and it is part of a loose nationwide network of like-minded charities linked together by ideology, personalities, conservative funders and websites, including the for-profit Breitbart News.[David] Horowitz's story shows how charities have become essential to modern political campaigns, amid lax enforcement of the federal limits on their involvement in politics, while taking advantage of millions of dollars in what amount to taxpayer subsidies. In interviews with The Washington Post, Horowitz, 78, acknowledged the Freedom Center's partisan mission and said its aim is to protect 'traditional American values' against adversaries on the left, who operate their own network of charities. ...

"Horowitz makes a good living as the Freedom Center chief executive, earning \$583,000 from a charity that received \$5.4 million in donations in 2015, according to the latest available records. But he said he has come to believe that his group and others across the political spectrum ought to be reined in to ensure they fulfill the original spirit of the Internal Revenue Service's charitable rules, even though such overhauls would be 'personally devastating for me.'" <http://wapo.st/2qPTAKb>

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WEST COAST WATCH -- "SpaceX Launches Previously Used Cargo Capsule for First Time," by L.A. Times' Samantha Masunaga: "SpaceX launched supplies to the International Space Station in a previously used spacecraft Saturday and then landed the rocket's first-stage booster back on Earth. With the launch, SpaceX's Dragon capsule joins a small number of spacecraft, most notably NASA's space shuttles, to reenter space - a first for the Hawthorne space company." <http://lat.ms/2qN0yLQ>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--"Hell Is Empty And All the Hedge Fund Managers Are At The Bellagio," by Hamilton Nolan in Deadspin: "All of the younger men looked like Jared Kushner, and all the younger women looked like Ivanka Trump might look if she had to work 14-hour

days. Their lives stretched out in front of them, down the Bellagio's gaudy, carpeted halls. They could fall in love over credit strategies, have a marriage announcement in the New York Times at 26 and a scandalous divorce announcement in the New York Post at 44." <http://bit.ly/2qP4b35>

--"**Amazon Is Killing My Sex Life**," by Tricia Romano in DAME Magazine: "The tech boom in Seattle is bringing in droves of successful, straight single guys. And as any woman will tell you: You don't want to date any of them." <http://bit.ly/2smYdbz> (h/t Longreads.com)

--"**Why are doughnut boxes pink? The answer could only come out of Southern California**," by LATimes' David Pierson: "A Cambodian doughnut shop owner asked Westco some four decades ago if there were any cheaper boxes available other than the standard white cardboard. Westco found leftover pink cardboard stock. It didn't hurt that pink was a few shades short of red, a lucky colour for the refugees, many of whom are ethnic Chinese. White, on the other hand, is the colour of mourning." <http://lat.ms/2s2ePbi>

--"**Who's the real cunt?**" by Andrew O'Hagan in the London Review of Books, reviewing "Mail Men: The Unauthorised Story of the 'Daily Mail', the Paper that Divided and Conquered Britain," by Adrian Addison: "The Mail desecrates the holy places where it likes to stake its claim, and would be a laughable rag, really, were it not for our degraded political culture taking it seriously. Every day in [editor Paul] Dacre's paper the people who make up the population of Britain, the people who teach your children and bandage your wounds, drive your trains or clean your floors, are described as aliens and forgers and scum." <http://bit.ly/2qKGihS>

--"**What Xi Jinping Wants**," by Graham Allison, author of "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?," in The Atlantic: "China's leader is determined to turn his country into 'the biggest player in the history of the world.' Can he do it while avoiding a dangerous collision with America?" <http://theatltn.tc/2qJg0II> ... **\$16.80 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2qOSwBs>

--"**Curtains For Us All? A Conversation With Martin Rees**" - Edge: "We can observe many galaxies, out to 13 billion light-years from us; however, there's no reason to think that that's all of physical reality. We want to know how much further reality extends beyond the domain we can see. It may go so far that all combinatorial options are fulfilled, that there are avatars of us far away making the right decision where we might make the wrong one." <http://bit.ly/2rt8Rxn>

--"**Standing up for cinema**," by Martin Scorsese in the Times Literary Supplement: "Every time I get back into the editing room, I feel the wonder of it. One image is joined with another image, and a third phantom event happens in the mind's eye - perhaps an image, perhaps a thought, perhaps a sensation. Something occurs, something absolutely unique to this particular combination or collision of moving images. And if you take a frame away from one or add a couple of frames to the other, the image in the

mind's eye changes." <http://bit.ly/2qKiBq8> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--**"Why We Fight Wars,"** by Matthew Evangelista in the Chronicle of Higher Education: "'Wars are not barroom brawls writ large,' wrote Barbara Ehrenreich. She was responding to Francis Fukuyama's claim in Foreign Affairs magazine that men are mainly responsible for military conflicts because 'aggression, violence, war, and intense competition for dominance in a status hierarchy are more closely associated with men than women,' and that 'statistically speaking it is primarily men who enjoy the experience of aggression.'" <http://bit.ly/2rtqVYc> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"More professionalism, less populism,"** by Jonathan Rauch and Benjamin Wittes in Brookings: "How voting makes us stupid, and what to do about it." <http://brook.gs/2qKBYz6>

--**"The Way Ahead,"** by Stephen Fry: "What Pandora did not know was that when she shut the lid of the jar so hastily she forever imprisoned inside one last little creature, which was left behind to beat its wings hopelessly in the box for ever. Its name was Elpis, Hope. The comparison seems rather good, don't you think? If Gutenberg's revolution was Pandora 2.0 and the Industrial Revolution 3.0 then the information age is Pandora 4.0." <http://bit.ly/2sy7A7y>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: last night at the WNO Opera Gala at the Kennedy Center: Samuel Alito, Ben Carson, Pat Leahy, Mick Mulvaney ... Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) running in Georgetown early this morning wearing an RWB shirt

OUT AND ABOUT -- Last night Michael Moroney and Francesca Chambers hosted their annual "Welcome to Summer" rooftop soiree in D.C.

SPOTTED: Michael and Beth Hoare, Steve Clemons, Meredith McPhillips, Elizabeth Landers, Tim and Shana Teehan, Olivia Peterson, Caren Auchman, John Arundel, Abby Phillip, Courtney Flanzer, Joel and Jordan Gehrke, Heidi Przybyla, Jennifer Dargan, Teddy Davis, Amanda House, Eli Lake, Holly Shulman, Nikki Schwab, Neil Grace, John Kartch, Brad Bosserman, Carolyn Fiddler, David Pasch, Adam Green, Ryan Williams, Erin McPike, Miranda Green, Morgan Finkelstein, Josh Dawsey, Janet Donovan, Tommy Burr, Fin Gomez, Jim Acosta, Byron Tao, Adrian Carrasquillo, Tierney Sneed, Giovanna Coia, Anne LeHardy, Natalie Strom, Ninio Fetalvo, and Brian K. Walsh.

ENGAGED -- **Alexandra Smith**, national chairman of the College Republican National Committee, got engaged in Jersey City on Saturday to fellow lawyer **Charlie Wilkes**, an associate at Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP in Woodbridge, N.J. They met on a College Republican campaign trip ten years ago. She posts on Facebook: "Last night, I said YES! to my person--the most wonderful man God could've given me. I love you,

Charlie." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2rGe73d> ... <http://bit.ly/2rz26u7>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- The Des Moines Register's news director **Annah Backstrom** married DMR business columnist and reporter **Joel Aschbrenner** Saturday evening on Lake Michigan in Annah's hometown of Muskegon, Michigan. Guests included caucus crew DMR's Grant Rodgers and Lynn Hicks, former RPI comms director Charlie and Anastasia Szold, former IDP press secretary Josh Levitt, and CNN's Betsy Klein. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2qPFKHw>

--**"Stephanie Akpa, Christopher Eiswerth"** -- N.Y. Times: "The bride, 33, is a policy counsel in Washington for Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts. She graduated cum laude from the University of California, San Diego, and received a law degree from Yale. ... The groom, 31, is a litigation associate in the Washington office of Sidley Austin, the Chicago law firm. He graduated summa cum laude from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., and received a law degree cum laude from Harvard. In 2013 and 2014, he was a law clerk for Judge Moore in Cleveland, where she has her chambers. ... The couple met at the wedding of mutual friends in summer 2013." <http://nyti.ms/2rpN4IM>

--**"Shivonn Foster, Chad Jones"**: "The couple met in 2007 at Howard University, from which they both graduated. The groom also received a doctorate of dental surgery there. Mrs. Jones, 30, works as an account director in the Washington office of Sunshine Sachs, a public relations firm in New York, where she is a publicist for progressive nonprofit organizations. She received a master's degree in corporate communications and public relations from Georgetown. ... Dr. Jones, 29, is a dentist for So Others Might Eat, a community health clinic, and for Dental Dreams, an office in Washington." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2sspOZc>

TRANSITIONS -- **Reagan Payne** is starting on June 12 at Cruise Automation, an autonomous vehicle startup out of San Francisco that was acquired by GM last year (<http://for.tn/2rpqeB6>). She'll be on Rebecca Mark's D.C.-based government relations team and will manage the eastern region. Payne previously worked for Rep. Susan Brooks (R-Ind.).

FORMER REP. ELLEN TAUSCHER (D-Calif.) has been appointed to the board of regents of the UC system. <http://bit.ly/2qUtn8r>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Direct Impact acting CEO Michael Fleischer, celebrating with family at Millie's restaurant in Spring Valley (hat tip: Nic Breeding)

BIRTHDAYS: Mike Murphy ... Steve Lombardo, chief marketing and comms. officer for Koch Industries (h/ts Mark Holden and Ken Spain) ... Mort Zuckerman is 8-0 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Emily Gold, associate producer at "For the Record" with Greta on MSNBC (h/t Sarah Gadsden) ... Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) is 46 (h/t Will Levi) ... Politico's Traci Schweikert ... Jim Wallis, president and founder of Sojourners, is 69 ... Talley Sergent ... George Burns, father of Alex and principal of Fieldston Lower School ... John Arundel,

associate publisher of Washington Life magazine (h/t Kevin Chaffee) ... D.C. photographer Daniel "Dan Around Town" Swartz (h/t Kelley McCormick) ... Anders Ericson is 19 ... Camden Stuebe, chief of staff at IJR (h/ts Alex Skatell and Michelle Zar) ... ProPublica's Justin Elliott (h/t Isaac Arnsdorf) ...

... **Dana Edwards Manatos**, Bush 43 WH alum and current co-CEO of Edward Marc Brands, Inc., the creator of Snappers ... Gena Wolfson, social media and digital content producer for SiriusXM Politics (h/t Danielle Lynn) ... reporter Polly Kreisman ... Optimus Partner Scott Tranter (h/t Kurt Bardella) ... WaPo's Colby Itkowitz ... Bloomberg's Lauren Spurr (h/t Kendall Breitman) ... Robert Schulte ... Clinton WH alum David Bolger, founder of Executive Briefing, is 55 (h/t Chris Lapetina) ... Deb Callahan, executive director at Bay Area Open Space Council ... Joel Packer, principal at the Raben Group (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Abigail Strayer ... Vinnie Wishrad ... Tracey Lewis (h/t Teresa Vilmain) ... Steve Weinberg is 69 ... Amelia Showalter, co-founder and CEO of Pantheon Analytics and an Obama 2012 alum ... The Raben Group's Ryan Daniels ... former Hawaii governor Linda Lingle is 64 ... Lori Ann LaRocco, CNBC's senior talent producer ... Greg Anrig ... Jack Buechner ... Ranya Kadri ... Nathan DeWitt ... Andrew Meehan ... Dr. Ruth Westheimer is 89 ... Angelina Jolie is 42 ... model Bar Refaeli is 32 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** All Aboard Florida wanted to create a faster and easier way to move around Florida. Morgan Stanley helped them raise capital to begin development of the country's first express, intercity railway to do just that. Not only are the new Brightline trains expected to reduce travel time across Southern Florida by approximately an hour¹, but they're also projected to take up to 3 million vehicles off the road each year, helping to reduce congestion and harmful emissions¹. Read more about Morgan Stanley's work at morganstanley.com/brightline. Capital creates change.

Disclaimer:

¹ Based on data provided by All Aboard Florida. For more information visit:

<http://allaboardflorida.com/projectdetails/aaf-fact-sheet>

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Politico

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Trump's nationalism wins out again

By Edward Isaac Dove 6/2/17, 7:10Pm

Distraught Democrats, resistant Republicans and just about everyone else still not ready to accept Donald Trump as their president have tried to pacify themselves with two thoughts – that he isn't capable of making any real impact, and that the moderates in the White House will sway him.

Withdrawing from the Paris Agreement is the latest, and biggest, smack of reality: they are wrong.

It's not Republican. It's not conservative. It's not right-wing. But it is consistent—again diving deep into the nationalism that he campaigned on last year and has been driving for the last 133 days.

“Isolating America behind a wall, if you will—not just in terms of our southern borders, but globally,” is how Michael Steele, the former Republican National Committee chairman, summed it up.

As for the “maybe Trump will change” dream or “we're playing the long game” protestations of Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, those are exceptions, or maybe just strategic feints, Steele said.

Trump lives behind his wall of nationalism, Steele said, despite the occasional moments that

seem like breaks.

“Like any medieval castle, there are slits for the Bowman to stand there and shoot out their arrows,” Steele said. “You have these occasional slits.”

Trump may not be passing much legislation, but he is governing, and governing straight out of his base. Like his now-routine early morning tweets undercutting what aides insisted on the night before, the unpredictability is predictable—his repeated claim in the Rose Garden speech that the Paris agreement was born of a global conspiracy to undermine the American economy, or that the money for the Green Climate Fund would be “raided” from America’s funds that would otherwise go to fight terrorism.

“The Paris Accord would undermine our economy, hamstring our workers, weaken our sovereignty, impose unacceptable legal risks, and put us at a permanent disadvantage to the other countries of the world,” Trump said, in a speech bookended by Vice President Mike Pence and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt taking the microphone to talk about the president’s courage.

Trump “has a good feel for where the base of the party is and appears to be unafraid of what the blowback will be from the media or critics in Europe,” said David Kochel, who was a senior strategist for Jeb Bush, who said that everything Trump is doing can be traced back to what skeptics spent last year insisting he’d never do—and imagining he didn’t really want to do.

Though many Republicans voiced problems with the Paris agreement, Trump’s approach is “like a funhouse mirror conservative—distorted in significant ways from what we’re used to seeing,” Kochel said.

The list is long: two Muslim bans, a reinstated “gag rule” that cuts funding for international organizations that offer abortion choice, a rollback in carbon emissions regulations, loosened requirements that companies comply with laws they disagree with where the rules conflict with “religious liberty,” a budget built on massive cuts despite lacking the math to pay for it, an Obamacare repeal too conservative for many Republican senators to support.

The counterargument: he was cowed into staying in NAFTA (for now), didn't scrap Obama's LGBT protection executive order (for now), kept the U.S. embassy to Israel in Tel Aviv (for now).

Pulling back on Paris, like many of the more significant moves Trump has made in office, isn't like nominating Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, which almost any Republican running for president last year would have been likely to do. It puts him at odds with many in the corporate and establishment wing of the party who thought they were in charge before he took over.

"Affirmation of the #ParisAgreement is not only about the climate: It is also about America remaining the global leader," tweeted Mitt Romney, who in four years went from GOP presidential nominee seeking Trump's endorsement to supplicant hoping to get picked as Trump's secretary of state to host of his annual conference next week in Utah that will amount to a support group for Republican holdouts.

Romney's tweet has more in common with the statement from the man who beat him in 2012. In former President Barack Obama's most aggressive statement about Trump since Nov. 8 Obama cited (though still without using Trump's name "the absence of American leadership" in the wake of the Paris decision.

But the White House was ready with an avalanche of prepared quotes from Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas), Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.V.), Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.), House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and many more.

White House aides even included the lukewarm approval of the move from Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) in the promotional email to reporters, saying, "I support President Trump's desire to re-enter the Paris Accord after the agreement becomes a better deal for America and business."

That's more optimistic than Trump's "we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair. And if we can, that's great. And if we can't, that's fine.

And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's separate statement praising the decision had less to do with Trump's politics or Paris, and more to do with reviving a favorite fight they can always agree on: "I applaud President Trump and his administration for dealing yet another significant blow to the Obama Administration's assault on domestic energy production and jobs."

Among Democrats, there was hope that the decision would snap people out of simply snickering over Trump's typos on Twitter, or salivating over the latest Russia revelations changes what the West Wing has been up to in between.

"This will wake people up," predicted Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel on Thursday afternoon. "It's a decision with not insignificant consequences. There is drama of what he's tweeted, [Sean] Spicer at the press conferences. But you make a decision like this, and all the other stuff is a distraction. It takes away from what he's doing that will impact America not over the next two months but over the next 20 years."

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THAT SETTLES IT! -- AP at 5:54 a.m.: "ST.PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) - Putin denies Russian state involvement in hacking, says hackers can't affect elections results abroad."

Good Thursday morning and happy first day of June. **THE PARIS ANNOUNCEMENT -- 3 P.M. TODAY -- THE BACKDROP** -- President Donald Trump -- joined by Vice President Mike Pence -- will announce whether the United States will drop out of the Paris climate agreement, joining Syria, which is in the midst of a civil war, and Nicaragua, which wanted the agreement to go further in punishing nations that don't comply. Inside the White House, there is near uniform agreement Trump will pull out, but some senior aides still think Trump will try to squeeze out a "better deal" by only partially ditching the climate accord.

ANDREW RESTUCCIA and JOSH DAWSEY -- "Inside the struggle to sway Trump on Paris: Steve Bannon and Scott Pruitt have spent months building pressure on the president to exit the climate deal -- and trying to outmaneuver Ivanka Trump": "Donald Trump's chief strategist and EPA administrator maneuvered for months to get the president to exit the Paris climate accord, shrewdly playing to his populist instincts and publicly pressing the narrative that the nearly 200-nation deal was effectively dead - boxing in the president on one of his highest-profile decisions to date.

"Steve Bannon and Scott Pruitt have sought to outsmart the administration's pro-Paris group of advisers, including Trump's daughter Ivanka, who were hoping the

president could be swayed by a global swell of support for the deal from major corporations, U.S. allies, Al Gore and even the pope. But some of that pro-Paris sentiment wound up being surprisingly tepid, according to White House aides who had expected that European leaders would make a stronger case during Trump's trip abroad earlier this month. ...

"Some White House aides held out the prospect that the president still might take the middle course that Ivanka Trump and others had advocated -- staying in the deal while drastically scaling back the Obama administration's non-binding carbon cleanup promises. But three White House officials said Wednesday that they expect Trump to make a clean break by withdrawing from the agreement, though they noted it's possible the president changes his mind at the last minute." <http://politi.co/2rsvPXM>

THE NITTY GRITTY ON HOW TRUMP CAN WITHDRAW, from Dawsey and Restuccia: "If he withdraws, how will Trump do it? He could abide by the formal procedures in the underlying text of the agreement, which mandate that a formal withdrawal will not go into effect until at least Nov. 4, 2020. Or he could pull out of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the underlying 1992 treaty that governs the negotiations, which would allow for a speedier pullout -- a far more radical step that would see the U.S. abstain from the entire climate negotiating process. He could also declare that the agreement is a treaty, which would require a two-thirds-majority ratification vote in the Senate that would certainly fail."

GOOD DETAIL, from NYT's Mike Shear and Coral Davenport: "At home, he faced urgent pleas from corporate leaders, including Tim Cook, the chief executive of Apple, who told Mr. Trump on Tuesday that pulling out was wrong for business, the economy and the environment. Elon Musk, the chief executive of Tesla, threatened to resign from two White House advisory boards if the president withdrew from the Paris agreement." <http://nyti.ms/2shnrbA>

--"All the ways Trump is shredding Obama's climate agenda" - Politico
<http://politi.co/2qDy5MD>

-- BOSTON GLOBE: "Boston scraps summit on climate with China": "The State Department-sponsored summit in Boston, revealed last June by then-secretary of state John F. Kerry, would have brought thousands of urban and business leaders to Boston from cities across the United States and China. It would have been the third such conference." <http://bit.ly/2sgZTU2>

ONLY IN PLAYBOOK: UNDERSTANDING TRUMP -- THE DAWSEY DOWNLOAD : "Senior administration officials told a dozen news outlets President Trump would withdraw from the Paris Accord, leaving few people completely sure he would do so. It is one of many hall-of-mirrors, sometimes head-spinning aspects of Trump's White House. Administration officials and advisers fan flames of firing officials like Sean Spicer and Reince Priebus, and even speculate on replacements, while the current aide works. As one Spicer ally recently said: 'How many times have people said he was going to be

fired? He is still at the podium.'

"Administration officials leak to the media hoping it will eventually become true and that coverage will sway Trump. White House officials sometimes don't trust one another and spread rumors. They call other aides and advisers to see what he is saying about them. And officials are contradicted by other officials -- and even Trump, who tests different strategies aloud to different people. He sometimes agrees with whoever is in the room with him. He likes to please and can dial dozens of friends in a weekend.

"So while Trump told people he was pulling out of the accord, and officials began moves to make it so, no one was exactly sure if he would change his mind before 3 p.m., when he promised a Rose Garden announcement. As one adviser he frequently speaks to said of a different issue last week: 'I heard that two days ago. That might not be true anymore.' Corey Lewandowski, Trump's first campaign manager, reminded people on the trail: The only person who speaks for Trump is Trump. It just depends who he is speaking to -- and when he is speaking."

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Morgan Stanley helped First Solar raise capital to bring clean, renewable energy to new markets worldwide. Capital creates change. Read the full story at morganstanley.com/firstsolar. CRC 1678408 01/17 *****

THE STORY DRIVING NEXT WEEK -- "Comey Expected to Testify Before Senate, if He Isn't Blocked," by NYT's Matt Apuzzo and Mike Schmidt: "Senators expect the former F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, to testify next week about his conversations with President Trump, congressional officials said on Wednesday, setting up a test of the White House's willingness to cooperate with investigations into Mr. Trump's associates.

"Putting the highly anticipated hearing on the calendar would force Mr. Trump to decide whether to invoke executive privilege and try to prevent Mr. Comey from testifying. Mr. Comey is expected to be asked about several conversations he had with the president, including one in which he says Mr. Trump encouraged him to stop investigating his former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn."
<http://nyti.ms/2qDSUHM>

THE LATEST ON RUSSIA -- "House Russia investigators subpoena Flynn, Cohen," by Austin Wright: "The House Intelligence Committee on Wednesday approved subpoenas for former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and President Donald Trump's longtime personal attorney, Michael Cohen, as part of the panel's investigation into Russia's meddling in the presidential election. The panel is also issuing subpoenas to businesses owned by the two men. The subpoenas to Flynn and Cohen were part of seven total subpoenas issued by the House committee on Wednesday, according to a congressional source who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Four of the subpoenas were related to the Russia probe, and three others were related to the issue of 'unmasking' - the process used by intelligence officials to learn the identities of people inside the United States who are referenced in intelligence

reports." <http://politi.co/2rX1QYt>

WELCOME BACK -- "Trump administration moves to return Russian compounds in Maryland and New York," by WaPo's Karen DeYoung and Adam Entous: "The Trump administration is moving toward handing back to Russia two diplomatic compounds, near New York City and on Maryland's Eastern Shore, that its officials were ejected from in late December as punishment for Moscow's interference in the 2016 presidential election. ... Early last month, the Trump administration told the Russians that it would consider turning the properties back over to them if Moscow would lift its freeze, imposed in 2014 in retaliation for U.S. sanctions related to Ukraine, on construction of a new U.S. consulate on a certain parcel of land in St. Petersburg. Two days later, the U.S. position changed. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak at a meeting in Washington that the United States had dropped any linkage between the compounds and the consulate, according to several people with knowledge of the exchanges." <http://wapo.st/2qiWT0R>

--**"Russia escalates spy games after years of U.S. neglect,"** by Ali Watkins: "In the throes of the 2016 campaign, the FBI found itself with an escalating problem: Russian diplomats, whose travel was supposed to be tracked by the State Department, were going missing. The diplomats, widely assumed to be intelligence operatives, would eventually turn up in odd places, often in middle-of-nowhere USA. One was found on a beach, nowhere near where he was supposed to be. In one particularly bizarre case, relayed by a U.S. intelligence official, another turned up wandering around in the middle of the desert.

"Interestingly, both seemed to be lingering where underground fiber optics cables tend to run. According to another U.S. intelligence official, 'they find these guys driving around in circles in Kansas. It's a pretty aggressive effort.' It's a trend that has led intelligence officials to conclude the Kremlin is waging a quiet effort to map the United States' telecommunications infrastructure, perhaps preparing for an opportunity to disrupt it." <http://politi.co/2qDSyNh>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Benghazi investigators set for rematch on Trump-Russia scandal," by Kyle Cheney and Austin Wright: "The last time Trey Gowdy and Elijah Cummings oversaw a politically explosive investigation, the two congressmen ripped into each other on national TV, as a grimacing Hillary Clinton looked on. With Washington in the grip of a new scandal over President Donald Trump and his team's possible ties to Russia, Gowdy and Cummings appear set for a reunion that would test a deeply divided Congress' ability to hold the White House to account. ...

"The Gowdy-Cummings relationship, forged over two years as the leaders of the House Select Committee on Benghazi, is as complicated as it will be critical. It's often harder for the executive branch to ignore bipartisan requests, which was a difficult hurdle during the Benghazi probe. The two men have squabbled publicly, but when the cameras are off, both profess respect for each other and an ability to work together,

however haltingly." <http://politi.co/2qJk2jD>

KEN VOGEL: "We were used, abused and exploited": "As he built support for his signature political issue, Donald Trump formed a powerful partnership with a non-profit group dedicated to families of those killed by undocumented immigrants, but now some of those families are alleging they were exploited by both the non-profit group and President Trump. More than a dozen families involved in the Houston-based Remembrance Project - including two who spoke at the Republican National Convention and several more who spoke at Trump's rallies or were featured in his campaign ads -- have parted ways with the organization, according to people familiar with the situation, including six of the families." <http://politi.co/2rHsXr0>

PAGE SIX: "CBS scrambling to find Scott Pelley replacement": "CBS insiders say Norah O'Donnell has the gravitas for the job, but news chiefs are reluctant to take her out of 'CBS This Morning,' which she hosts alongside Charlie Rose and Gayle King, because the show is doing so well it could soon overtake NBC's 'Today' in overall ratings.

"One insider said, 'Norah would be willing to do both the evening and the morning if CBS wanted her to do so, but it would be a lot of work.' CBS News chiefs had been in talks with Willie Geist last year, but insiders said he wanted too much money to leave NBC. Other TV insiders say CNN's Jake Tapper could have been up for the role as he 'had been making it clear that he's ready for something bigger.' But Tapper, as well as Anderson Cooper, who's reported for '60 Minutes,' have long-term contracts with CNN. Plus, CBS News doesn't need to get the new evening anchor into the chair until September for the fall-ratings push." <http://pge.sx/2qJ17W7>

THE JUICE ...

--**JOE AND MIKA** will serve as visiting fellows this summer and fall at Harvard Kennedy School's Institute of Politics. They'll do a D.C. event with IOP students and alums in the "Summer in Washington" program and will go up to Cambridge in the fall to do more campus events with students. <http://bit.ly/2reEdcP>

-- **WAP0 SCOOP:** The Obamas paid \$8.1 million to buy the Kalorama home they've been renting from Joe and Giovanna Lockhart. Lockhart purchased the house for \$5.295 million in 2014. <http://wapo.st/2refFRg>

-- **EVERETT EISSENSTAT**, the Senate Finance Committee's top Republican trade counsel, is expected to join the National Economic Council as deputy director, Adam Behsudi, Andrew Restuccia and Ben White report. <http://politi.co/2rsGcLc>

-- **PETER J. BOYER** to the Weekly Standard: "Morning Media has learned that he'll be a national correspondent at the 22-year-old conservative publication, as part of what EIC Stephen Hayes is calling a 'big staff expansion.' Boyer is an illustrious magazine veteran who has done tours at Vanity Fair, The New Yorker and Newsweek. But his

most recent job, as an editor at large for Fox News, included a brush with controversy, as it was revealed that Boyer was present for a series of 'war room' meetings in which Roger Ailes plotted a smear campaign against biographer Gabriel Sherman."

-- **DAVID SUTPHEN** is leaving the Brunswick Group after nearly nine years at the firm. He is joining 2U, which partners with colleges and universities to work on digital education, as chief communications and engagement officer. **George Little** will replace Sutphen as head of the Brunswick Group's D.C. office. Little joined the firm in 2015 as a partner. He previously was a Pentagon press secretary and director of public affairs and spokesman for the CIA.

THE MOMENT -- per California Playbook: Recode's Kara Swisher to Sen. Kamala Harris on stage Tuesday night at the #codecon conference in Rancho Palos Verdes: "Are you planning on running for President in 2020?" Harris: "I'm not giving that any considering. I've got to stay focused." Swisher: "That's a yes." <http://bit.ly/2qEeWWK>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A member of the Secret Service looks out on the North Lawn from a balcony of the White House on May 31. | Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

CLICKER - Mary Meeker's annual report -- "Internet Trends 2017 -- Code Conference" <http://bit.ly/1dB4Zm9>

LETHAL DUO -- ADAM NAGOURNEY and JONATHAN MARTIN in Vista, California: **"Democrats' Bid to Regain Hold on House Begins in California":** "If Democrats have any chance of capturing the 24 Republican seats they need to take back control of the House, the road to victory starts here in California, and particularly in Orange County, a former conservative bastion that favored Hillary Clinton in 2016. It was the first time the county had voted for a Democratic presidential candidate since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936.

"All 14 members of the California Republican congressional delegation voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act, including seven who, like Mr. Issa, represent districts that voted for Mrs. Clinton. Four of those come from districts that include Orange County. With its changing demographics and its declining Republican Party, California has increasingly loomed as the center of any national battle for House control. The Trump fervor this year offers an opportunity for Democrats to make the sort of congressional district gains that have eluded them even as they have come to dominate state politics over the last decade.

"At least for one election, it seems, there will be a role reversal: The state that has

long served mostly as just an A.T.M. for candidates from across the nation will be on the receiving end of campaign cash. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, in an early show of force, is opening an office in Irvine. The committee's western director, Kyle Layman, is already on the scene, working at a cafe table outside a Whole Foods Market in Tustin until a lease is signed." <http://nyti.ms/2sqW2mO>

THE ECONOMIST WEIGHS IN ON U.K. ELECTIONS -- "Backing the open, free-market centre is not just directed towards this election. We know that this year the Lib Dems are going nowhere. But the whirlwind unleashed by Brexit is unpredictable. Labour has been on the brink of breaking up since [Jeremy] Corbyn took over. If [Theresa] May polls badly or messes up Brexit, the Tories may split, too. Many moderate Conservative and Labour MPs could join a new liberal centre party-just as parts of the left and right have recently in France. So consider a vote for the Lib Dems as a down-payment for the future. Our hope is that they become one element of a party of the radical centre, essential for a thriving, prosperous Britain." <http://econ.st/2rHxOYU>

2020 WATCH -- "Trump to hold reelection fundraiser in June," by Alex Isenstadt: "President Donald Trump continues to prepare for his next election - in 2020. Trump is slated to headline a Washington, D.C. fundraising dinner on June 28 that will benefit Trump Victory, a joint fundraising agreement between Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee, according to an invitation obtained by POLITICO. Funds raised at the event will be split between the two accounts." <http://politi.co/2mcyoh>

-- **"Biden launches PAC, keeping options open,"** by Isaac Dove: Former Vice President Joe Biden will launch a new PAC on Thursday, American Possibilities, giving him a way of supporting candidates and keeping his own options open for a potential 2020 presidential run. Officially, the group will be 'dedicated to electing people who believe that this country is about dreaming big, and supporting groups and causes that embody that spirit,' according to the PAC's launch materials. Biden has hired Greg Schultz, his political director during his second term as vice president, as the executive director of the PAC." <http://politi.co/2qDwana>

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THE FAMILY -- "How Jared Kushner built a luxury skyscraper using loans meant for job-starved areas," by WaPo's Shawn Boburg: "Jared Kushner and his real estate partners wanted to take advantage of a federal program in 2015 that would save them

millions of dollars as they built an opulent, 50-story residential tower in this city's booming waterfront district, just across the Hudson River from Lower Manhattan. There was just one problem: The program was designed to benefit projects in poor, job-starved areas. So the project's consultants got creative, records show.

"They worked with state officials in New Jersey to come up with a map that defined the area around 65 Bay Street as a swath of land that stretched nearly four miles and included some of the city's poorest and most crime-ridden neighborhoods. At the same time, they excluded some wealthy neighborhoods only blocks away. The tactic - critics liken it to the gerrymandering of legislative districts - made it appear that the luxury tower was in an area with extraordinarily high unemployment, allowing Kushner Companies and its partners to get \$50 million in low-cost financing through the EB-5 visa program." <http://wapo.st/2sqUvNx>

-- **"Trump administration approves tougher visa vetting, including social media checks,"** by Reuters' Yeganeh Torbati: "Critics argued that the new questions would be overly burdensome, lead to long delays in processing and discourage international students and scientists from coming to the United States. Under the new procedures, consular officials can request all prior passport numbers, five years' worth of social media handles, email addresses and phone numbers and 15 years of biographical information including addresses, employment and travel history." <http://reut.rs/2rsrX94>

TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE -- "Trump White House grants waivers of ethics rules," by Josh Gerstein: "President Donald Trump's executive order on ethics has been waived at least 11 times since the administration came into office in January, according to records the White House posted online Wednesday night. The waivers allow White House staffers to work on matters that could affect their former employers or clients or involve issues from which the aides would be normally be excluded because of past lobbying work. The waivers allow White House staffers to work on matters that could affect their former employers or clients or involve issues from which the aides would be normally be excluded because of past lobbying work." <http://politi.co/2rHz1zL>

-- **WHO GOT THE WAIVERS:** Kellyanne Conway to work with former clients, Stephen Bannon to engage with Breitbart, energy lobbyist Michael Catanzaro to work on "energy and environmental policy issues," and tax policy adviser Shahira Knight, formerly of Fidelity, to work on tax issues. Andrew Olmem, a White House economic aide, to work on finance issues although he previously lobbied for the industries, Mike Pence's chief of staff Josh Pitcock to work on issues related to Indiana and six lawyers from Jones Day, "including [Don] McGahn, were granted approval to take part in meetings with their former Jones Day colleagues relating to the firm's ongoing legal representation of Trump, his campaign and related entities."

-- **POLITICO EUROPE** has launched a U.K. Election Tracker. **Available for iPhones** <http://politi.co/2sl4gN1>

MEDIAWATCH - SiriusXM later this week is launching two new weekend shows, as it

continues to brand itself as "The Voice of the Resistance" to the Trump administration. "Signal Boost" is hosted by former Clinton campaign staffers Zerlina Maxwell and Jess McIntosh and will premiere on Saturday at 10 a.m. ET, while "#WokeAF" launches Sunday at 10 a.m. ET on SiriusXM Progress channel 127.

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Janet Yellen on yesterday's 1:25 pm United flight from Washington to Chicago with four security guards ... Kurt Bardella as a background actor as a "Reporter" in a few episodes of this new season of "House of Cards" -- **pics** <http://bit.ly/2rnCnoc>

HAPPENING TODAY: Former HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell starts her first day as American University's first female president. Burwell's scheduled to meet with faculty, staff and students as part of a listening tour.

WASHINGTON INC. - Targeted Victory is forming a new partnership with Chris Wilson's polling and intelligence firm WPAI. <http://politi.co/2shekY8>

TRANSITIONS -- Christine Wormuth will be the Atlantic Council's first director of its new Adrienne Arsht Center for Resilience. She was formerly under secretary of defense for policy under President Barack Obama.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Mary Beth Gombita, director of media relations at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and **Stephen Gombita**, an associate at DLA Piper, recently welcomed Palmer Stephen Gombita. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2rnDDrz>

-- **Alicia D'Angelo**, account manager for audience solutions at POLITICO, and **Charles D'Angelo**, president at Westmount Capital Group welcomed their daughter into the world on Tuesday at 11:30 p.m. "Arabella Charlotte D'Angelo arrived almost 2 weeks after her due date, and while mom and dad are thrilled she is finally with them, everyone on the Audience Solutions team is slightly disappointed that no one won the due date betting pool." **Pics** <http://politi.co/2qEmsoo> ... <http://politi.co/2sh5oSV>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Alex Seitz-Wald, political reporter for NBC News and MSNBC. How he's celebrating: "My wife and I went to a bed and breakfast on the water in the Eastern Shore of Maryland over the Memorial Day weekend, which was also our first anniversary! I'll also get together with some friends at a bar in D.C. on my actual birthday." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2rsLnuC>

BIRTHDAYS: Sam Smith -- her parents are coming into town to take her to dinner at Le Diplomate (hat tips: Bubba and Charlie the dog) ... Alex Allbritton is 10 ... Dan Bartlett ... Alex Stoddard (h/t Geoff Morrell) ... Rep. Gregg Harper (R-Miss.) is 61 ... Spencer Ackerman, national security reporter at the Daily Beast and a Guardian and Wired alum,

is 37 ... Washington's favorite winemaker Alex Gambal ... Jenny Cizner of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs ... Karen Tramontano of Blue Star Strategies ... Leslie Harris (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Constance Boozer, research assistant for Senate Majority Leader Schumer ... Elizabeth Glidden ... former Rep. Mark Green (R-Wisc.) is 57 ... Axios news desk reporter Shane Savitsky (h/t Bubba) ... Irena Vidulovic ... Elizabeth Rojas Levi ... Forest Harger ... Cruz-world's Jason Johnson ... Greg Nelson ... Nairi Hourdajian, VP of marketing and comms at Canaan Partners and an Uber and GPG alum ... Ronnie Dunn, one half of the legendary duo Brooks & Dunn (h/t Kurt Bardella) ...

... **Erin Shields Britt**, director of corporate comms. at CVS Health ... GOP ad man and Pittsburgh native Jim Innocenzi ... Mark Lotto ... Matt Burns ... Mac O'Brien, senior associate at Hamilton Place Strategies ... Suzanne Merkelson ... Addie Bryant ... Sean Kennedy, former Obama WH aide turned SVP for global gov't affairs for Airlines for America ... Steve Duprey ... Diane Zeleny ... Bill Shuler ... Christopher Minakowski is 46 ... Dominic Vilmain ... Abby Spring ... Timothy Gannon ... Heather Matson ... Addisu Demissie (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Steven Holmes ... Dee Sachetti ... Terrance Green ... Pat Boone is 83 ... Morgan Freeman is 8-0 ... Heidi Klum is 44 ... Alanis Morissette is 43 (h/ts AP)

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To: Erick-Woods Erickson[ewerickson@me.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 8/15/2017 8:19:59 PM
Subject: NTK: Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Scott Pruitt has received praise from Minnesota's Democratic Governor and The Star Tribune for his work.

Need To Know Network

August 15, 2017

<http://ntknetwork.com/here-is-why-keith-ellisons-community-forum-to-save-the-epa-is-pointless/>

Democratic National Committee vice chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) is holding a community forum to save the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Minnesota on Tuesday. It's a curious move, given that the EPA has received bipartisan praise for its work in Minnesota under the leadership of Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Come and join Congressman Ellison along with environmental advocates, scientists, and musicians to learn about Trump's plan for the EPA and how we're fighting back in Congress," is how Ellison's Tuesday night forum is billed.

Ellison's attacks on the EPA, and specifically its work in Minnesota, are strange given that Pruitt has received praise in the state of Minnesota for his support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Additionally, Minnesota's Democratic Governor Mark Dayton has praised Pruitt for working to eliminate the federal government's red tape.

"Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies," Minnesota Public Radio wrote in July.

During a visit to Minnesota in July, Pruitt "affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative."

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The Star Tribune’s editorial board, which is a traditionally liberal-leaning paper, praised Pruitt for his support for the Great Lakes restoration project.

“Last month, Governor Dayton praised EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to eliminate federal bureaucracy to state agencies, and The Star Tribune applauded Pruitt’s efforts to protect the Great Lakes. Administrator Pruitt is committed to protecting Minnesota’s environment and provide Americans with regulatory certainty,” an EPA spokesman said in a statement.

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Sent: Tue 8/15/2017 8:19:36 PM
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From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 7/31/2017 6:53:30 PM
Subject: FW: Hey Jeff

<http://ntknetwork.com/pruitts-hometown-editorial-board-blasts-his-critics/>

From: Jeff Bechdel [mailto:jbechdel@ntknetwork.com]
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2017 2:37 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Hey Jeff

NTK covered this today: <http://ntknetwork.com/pruitts-hometown-editorial-board-blasts-his-critics/>

On Sun, Jul 30, 2017 at 4:49 PM, Jeff Bechdel <jbechdel@ntknetwork.com> wrote:

Thanks for flagging

On Jul 30, 2017, at 11:04 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Off-the-record, since some outlets have decided to attack Pruitt for leaving D.C., wanted to make sure you saw this from the Tulsa World.

- Associated Press: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/watchdog-group-seeks-probe-epa-chief-pruitts-travel-48908977>
- Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-epa-pruitt-oklahoma-idUSKBN1A90A9>
- New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/24/climate/scott-pruitt-epa-travel-expenses.html>

From: EPA Press Office [mailto:press=epa.gov@cmail20.com] **On Behalf Of** EPA Press Office

Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2017 8:28 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Tulsa World: Heaven forfend! Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends! - Preview

The Tulsa World

Heaven Forfend! Scott Pruitt Is Going Home On Weekends!

NOTE 1: The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of “green” lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we’re being heard, too.

NOTE 2: It’s apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn’t abandoned his family

Editorial

July 30, 2017

http://www.tulsaworld.com/opinion/editorials/tulsa-world-editorial-heaven-forfend-scott-pruitt-is-going-home/article_d54095df-4a88-5e5f-910b-34fa0944d8d4.html

If we were supposed to be shocked to learn that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is going home on weekends, we’re not.

A fishing expedition request for Pruitt’s EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered just that, and that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates don’t approve of.

The New York Times first reported the results of a Freedom of Information request for Pruitt’s expense accounts filed by the Environmental Integrity Project, which has a history of blocking development and encouraging regulation. The findings: Pruitt returned to his Tulsa home at least 10 times in his first three months in office, costing taxpayers more than \$15,000.

During his trips home, Pruitt made some stops, including an informational meeting at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

As outrages go, it’s not worth much.

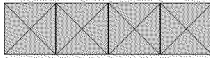
The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of “green” lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we’re being heard, too.

We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation’s bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans. If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists.

It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family.

[To Read The Full Story Click Here](#)

<image001.png>



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20004

[Unsubscribe](#)

--

Jeff Bechdel

NTK Network

jbechdel@ntknetwork.com

To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 3/9/2018 3:01:58 PM
Subject: Re: FOR APPROVAL//RE: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

Yes.

On Mar 9, 2018, at 9:40 AM, Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov> wrote:

I think we can use Jahan's quote.

“We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house. This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager's PR firm to run EPA's What's Upstream campaign.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Kevin Bogardus [<mailto:kbogardus@eenews.net>]
Sent: Friday, March 9, 2018 9:36 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

Hey guys,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

Myself and a colleague are working on a piece about Go BIG Media, Inc. and EPA. Go BIG Media, a Republican media firm, signed a contract with EPA last month to help produce an

“end of year report” (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>). I had some questions for you about this, which are:

■• Did Go BIG Media, Inc. work on EPA’s “EPA Year in Review 2017-2018” report (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/year_in_review_3.5.18.pdf)? If so, what exactly did Go BIG Media do on the report? Editing? Graphics? Design? Please be specific as possible.

■• Did EPA pay Go BIG Media for this work on the report? If so, how much? According to [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) data, \$0 of the contract has been obligated but Elliot Fuchs, Go BIG Media’s controller, told me that EPA did pay the firm \$6,500 for its work for the agency. I wanted to check that with you to make sure it was accurate.

■• How did Go BIG Media end up doing this work for EPA? Who contacted who first?

■• Is Go BIG Media’s work on this report required under the contract Go BIG Media signed with EPA last month for “design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report” (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>)?

■• The [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) data shows there were two offers received for this contract. Who else bid for this contract?

■• Go BIG Media is a Republican media firm. The last time a Republican firm, Definers Corp., had a contract with EPA, Definers ended up losing its contract with EPA. Are you worried about a similar backlash to this contract?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

E&E News reporter

kbogardus@eenews.net

202-446-0401 (p)

202-247-7844 (c)

202-737-5299 (f)

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To: Kevin Bogardus[kbogardus@eenews.net]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 3/9/2018 3:01:46 PM
Subject: Re: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

“We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house. This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager’s PR firm to run EPA’s What’s Upstream campaign.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On Mar 9, 2018, at 9:35 AM, Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net> wrote:

Hey guys,

It’s Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

Myself and a colleague are working on a piece about Go BIG Media, Inc. and EPA. Go BIG Media, a Republican media firm, signed a contract with EPA last month to help produce an “end of year report” (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>). I had some questions for you about this, which are:

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Kevin Bogardus

E&E News reporter

kbogardus@eenews.net

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202-247-7844 (c)

202-737-5299 (f)

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E&E NEWS

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To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 8/14/2017 1:54:12 PM
Subject: Fwd: Something for Monday

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jeff Bechdel <jbechdel@ntknetwork.com>
Date: August 14, 2017 at 8:43:10 AM EDT
To: "Wilcox, Jahan" <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Something for Monday

Here's what we put together on this. Thanks for flagging. <http://ntknetwork.com/report-obama-epa-paid-uneared-overtime-to-employees/>

On Fri, Aug 11, 2017 at 2:31 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Jeff –

Off-the-record/without attribution ...

Wanted to share with you that a new EPA Office of Inspector General (OIG) came out on Wednesday that found EPA employees (**from the previous administration**) were earning emergency premium pay (overtime pay) without justification. According to the report, the OIG found that the Seattle, Washington regional office regularly gave their employees emergency premium pay without justification.

•https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-08/documents/_epaig_20170809-17-p-0355.pdf

I would also note that according to FedPay, the average EPA employee makes \$113,820. Additionally, there are 76 employees who make over \$180,000 which is more than what U.S. Senator or U.S. Congressman make (who are actually elected by the people).

Given all of the public outcry over President Trump's **proposed** budget, there is clearly fat that can be cut at the EPA – specifically emergency premium pay without justification – and of all of the waste, fraud and abuse that occurred at the EPA while Obama was in charge.

BACKGROUND ...

During Obama's Administration EPA Employees Saw Their Average Pay Increase By Over 13 Percent ...

In 2016, the average EPA employee made \$113,820. "The Environmental Protection Agency had 15,561 employees in 2015 with an average pay of \$113,820.16. The most common occupation was environmental protection specialist, followed by general physical science." (www.federalpay.org/epa, Accessed 08/11/17)

In 2008, the year before Obama took office, the average EPA employee made \$99,672. "The Environmental Protection Agency had 18,247 employees in 2015 with an average pay (base salary + bonus) of \$99,672.39. The most common occupation was environmental protection specialist, followed by general physical science." (www.federalpay.org/epa, Accessed 08/11/17)

EPA's OIG REPORT: Concerns Over Compliance, Accountability and Consistency Identified With EPA's Biweekly Pay Cap Waiver Process ...

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-08/documents/_epaoig_20170809-17-p-0355.pdf

The EPA OIG found concerns with EPA Region 10, which is in Seattle, that found inconsistencies with emergency premium pay or overtime pay. "The OIG identified concerns over compliance, accountability and consistency with EPA Region 10's and headquarters' biweekly pay cap waiver process." ([EPA OIG Report](#), 08/09/17)

EPA's Seattle regional office exceeded biweekly pay caps with little if any explanation. "EPA Region 10 [Seattle] provided waiver requests for some but not most instances where employees exceeded the biweekly pay cap during fiscal years 2015, 2016 and 2017 (through January 7, 2017). In addition, 11 of 15 requests provided by Region 10 lacked adequate information to determine whether there was an emergency with a threat to life and property, or whether that work was critical to the mission of the agency. While all requests were approved by the Region 10 Regional Administrator as required, only one request was approved by the Region 10 Human Resources Officer as required by EPA policy. This occurred because the region did not have an internal policy or process in place to address review by the regional Human Resources Officer, the need for sufficient justification, or the retention of supporting documents. As a result, the potential exists that Region 10 employees could be overpaid or be paid for work that does not meet the intent of premium pay requirements in 5 U.S.C. § 5547." ([EPA OIG Report](#), 08/09/17)

There were numerous inconsistencies and little accountability with the processing of waivers at the EPA's Region 10 office. "We also identified inconsistencies and a

lack of accountability over the processing of Region 10's waivers within the EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) and Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). Based on interviews with officials and personnel, we learned that there is no clear line of responsibility to maintain documentation for waiver requests or to track requests and approvals between the region, OARM and OCFO. Neither OARM nor OCFO could provide a list of waivers for the period requested or supporting documentation. Both offices denied responsibility for tracking the waivers and maintaining the supporting documentation. The agency is updating the biweekly pay cap waiver policies and procedures." ([EPA OIG Report](#), 08/09/17)

Draining The Swamp At The EPA ...

EPA ends \$1 million taxpayer funded gym membership program. "The Environmental Protection Agency has ended a nearly \$1 million program that provided gym memberships for employees. The new administration under EPA administrator Scott Pruitt identified the gym memberships as an abuse of taxpayer dollars. Examples of the program's misuse included \$15,000 for gym memberships for 37 EPA scientists in Las Vegas last year." ([The Washington Free Beacon](#), 06/09/17)

Pruitt Ended The Taxpayer Funded Gym Memberships At The EPA.

"Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Thursday that the days of gym memberships being paid for by the American taxpayer are over. Pruitt was on "Fox and Friends," where he was asked about documents released Wednesday that show EPA employees spent more than \$15,000 on gym memberships outside of the free services they were already being given." ([Washington Examiner](#), 04/13/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Jeff Bechdel
NTK Network
jbechdel@ntknetwork.com

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 8/11/2017 8:04:04 PM
Subject: Update on Definers

George –

I know you are on vacation (or out of the office) so no need to respond but where are we on Definers doing all of our clips? Hope you have a great weekend.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 3/8/2018 3:26:40 PM
Subject: IG LEAKS - 4

From: Biesecker, Michael [mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in courier-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

Thanks,

Michael



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michael Biesecker

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“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe – the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.” -- Mark Twain, 1906

“I go with Custer and will be at the death.” – AP reporter Mark Kellogg’s final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify The Associated Press immediately by telephone at +1-212-621-1500 and delete this email. Thank you.

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 4/25/2018 2:47:56 PM
Subject: RE: Request for comment on hearings

“Congressional Hearings are an opportunity to reiterate the accomplishments of President Trump’s EPA, which includes: working to repeal Obama’s Clean Power Plan and WOTUS, providing regulatory certainty, and declaring a war on lead - all while returning to Reagan-era staffing levels.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Friedman, Lisa [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 7:32 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Request for comment on hearings

Hi Liz & Jahan,

I’m running a story today that advances the congressional hearings at which Mr. Pruitt will testify Thursday.

The story will include and make reference to a document that I have, entitled “Hot Topics.” The story will characterize this document as outlining Mr. Pruitt’s potential responses to likely questions during the hearings.

Can you tell me who drafted this document? I’d also like to get a comment on whether it accurately describes answers that Mr. Pruitt has been prepped by staff to give.

I won’t attach the actual document but for purposes of verifying its validity with you, this with you it begins:

HOT TOPICS

Condo

Kevin Minoli, EPA’s principal deputy general counsel, in a March 30 memo determined that the rate for 30 consecutive days would have equated to a monthly rent of \$1,500. Minoli described that as “ reasonable

market value." He also found it did not constitute a "prohibited gift." I would be happy to provide that memo to your staff.

These, according to the document, are some of the other topics he is prepared to address — several of which I will make reference to in the story:

SCIF; Sweeping the office; Biometric Locks; Bullet proof vehicles and tires; Office Decoration; Netjets; G7 Trip; Staffing (Raises; Samantha Dravis; Alleged Reassignment of Staff); Sue and Settle; Super Fund Task Force; Travel; First Class Travel; Morocco; Non-Commercial Flights; Homebuilders Association Hotel; Advisory Panels (membership, grants); Definers Contract; Chlorpyrifos; Climate change strategic plan; Enforcement; Funding; DOJ Funding; emails; Environmental Justice; War on Lead; IRIS; grants process; meetings with industry; Narragansett Bay; Regulatory Task Force; Reorganizations; and VERA/ViSP.

Finally, the story will point out that, according to the preparations shown in this document, Mr. Pruitt may say that other people were responsible for the bulk of the recent spending and ethics issues like frequent first class travel, the SCIF and pay raises.

I will need a comment on this by 11 a.m, and of course if you have any other comment on Mr. Pruitt's plans for testifying before Congress tomorrow I will certainly include. I'll be out of pocket for the next hour but you can also call me on my cell after 8:30 a.m. if you'd like to speak directly.

Thanks so much,

Lisa

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Matt Mackowiak[matt.mackowiak@gmail.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Sat 4/7/2018 1:35:22 PM
Subject: Re: 4/8/18 Sunday Talk Lineup

Nice

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 7, 2018, at 12:17 AM, Matt Mackowiak <matt.mackowiak@gmail.com> wrote:

--NBC's **"Meet the Press"**: Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) ... Cambridge Analytica co-founder Christopher Wylie. Panel: Cook Political Report editor Charlie Cook, The New York Times' Helene Cooper, presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin and National Review editor Rich Lowry.

--ABC's **"This Week"**: White House Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Thomas Bossert ... Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.). Panel: ABC News' Mary Bruce, ABC News' Cokie Roberts, NPR/WAMU host Joshua Johnson and McClatchy's Franco Ordoñez.

--CBS's **"Face the Nation"**: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin ... Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA) ... Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) ... WIRED Magazine editor in chief Nicholas Thompson. Panel: The Atlantic editor in chief Jeffrey Goldberg, Bloomberg News' Toluse Olorunnipa, AP's Julie Pace and National Review's Ramesh Ponnuru.

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: White House National Economic Council director Larry Kudlow ... Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.). Panel: Former Bush White House senior adviser Karl Rove, former Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD), Heritage Action for America CEO Michael Needham and Fox News political analyst Juan Williams. "Power Player of the Week" segment with former HHS Secretary and American University president Sylvia Burwell.

--Fox News' **"Sunday Morning Futures"** (10am – 12pm ET): Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) ... Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) ... author Gordon Chang ("The Coming Collapse of China") ... Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX). Panel: Former Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and The Wall Street Journal's Mary Kissel.

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"** (11am ET / 10am CT): The Washington Examiner's Sarah Westwood ... The Federalist's Mollie Hemingway ... former Ohio Senate Minority Leader and American University's Capri Cafaro ... pollster Frank Luntz ... technology analyst Shana Glenzer ... The Washington Examiner's Emily Jashinsky ... radio host Bill Press.

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King (SUN 8am ET): Panel: Politico's Eliana Johnson, CNN's Manu Raju, TIME Magazine's Molly Ball and The Washington Post's Josh Dawsey.

--**CNN's "State of the Union"** (9am ET / 12pm ET): White House National Economic Council director Larry Kudlow ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME). Panel: MoveOn.org senior advisor Karine Jean-Pierre, former Obama White House Communications Director Jennifer Psaki, Center for Equal Opportunity chair Linda Chavez and U.S. Senate candidate Dr. Kelli Ward (R-AZ).

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"** (SUN 10am, 1pm ET): Former Obama White House National Economic Council director Larry Summers ... former Obama White House National Security Advisor Tom Donilon ... former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Princeton University's Adm. Mike Mullen (Ret.) ... author and foreign correspondent Rania Abouzeid ("No Turning Back: Life, Loss, and Hope in Wartime Syria").

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: (SUN 11am ET): The New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet. Panel: The New York Magazine's Olivia Nuzzi, political analyst Jeff Greenfield and radio host and The Resurgent founder Erick Erickson ... former Sinclair reporter Jonathan Beaton.

--**Univision's "Al Punto"** (SUN 10am ET / 10am PT): Former Mexican President Vicente Fox ... Mexican presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador ... wife of Venezuelan rebel helicopter pilot (Óscar Pérez) Danahis Vivas and the mother of the pilot Aminta Pérez ... deported U.S. Army veteran Hector Barajas ... New York City Schools chancellor Richard Carranza ... actor and filmmaker Eugenio Derbez.

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"** (SAT 6pm ET): Interviews from the "State of the Net"

conference with Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Cybersecurity and Communications Jeanette Manfra ... CenturyLink national security & emergency preparedness director Kathryn Condello ... Zello CEO Bill Moore ... Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cyber & International Communications Policy Robert Strayer ... Freedom House Freedom on the Net director Sanja Kelly ... **“Newsmakers”** (SUN 10am ET): FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb, questioned by Bloomberg News’ Anna Edney and Kaiser Health News’ Sarah Jane Tribble ... **“Q&A”** (SUN 8pm & 11pm ET): Author and theoretical physicist Michio Kaku (“The Future of Humanity: Terraforming Mars, Interstellar Travel, Immortality, and Our Destiny Beyond Earth”).

--**MSNBC’s “Kasie DC”** (SUN 7pm ET): Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) ... Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) ... congressional candidate Lt. Col. Amy McGrath (Ret.) (D-KY) ... former RNC chairman Michael Steele ... MSNBC anchor Nicolle Wallace ... BBC News’ Katty Kay ... Voto Latino’s Maria Teresa Kumar ... USA Today’s Susan Page ... The New York Times’ Elisabeth Bumiller ... AP’s Jonathan Lemire ... Axios’ Sara Fischer ... NBC News’ Jo Ling Kent ... CNBC’s Kayla Tausche.

--**PBS’ “To the Contrary”**: Heritage Foundation president Kay James.

--**Washington Times’ “Mack on Politics”** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at MackOnPolitics.com: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Matt Mackowiak

Cell: (512) 423-6116

Email: matt.mackowiak@gmail.com

Blog: <http://www.potomacflacks.com>

Twitter: [@MattMackowiak](https://twitter.com/MattMackowiak)

Company website: <http://www.potomacstrategygroup.com>

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 8/2/2017 5:19:18 PM
Subject: NTK: Retiring EPA Official Uses FY18 Budget as Excuse for Departure

Retiring EPA Official Uses FY18 Budget as Excuse for Departure

Elizabeth Southerland is the latest senior EPA official who was up for retirement and used the occasion to blast President Trump and Administrator Pruitt...

NTK Network

August 2, 2017

<http://ntknetwork.com/retiring-epa-official-uses-fy18-budget-as-excuse-for-departure/>

A senior official at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) claimed in a letter Tuesday that she's resigning from the agency because of President Trump's proposed budget for fiscal year 2018 (FY18), among other reasons.

Here's an excerpt from the memo she sent her colleagues:

Under the new federalism, however, the President's FY18 budget proposes cuts to state and tribal funding as draconian as the cuts to EPA, while at the same time reassigning a number of EPA responsibilities to the states and tribes. If they want to maintain their current level of monitoring, permitting, 2 inspections, and enforcement, states will have to increase taxes and establish new user fees. Even if they are able to do this over time, the proposed FY18 budget cuts to state, tribal and federal environmental programs would result in thousands of jobs lost in the short term, in EPA, state and tribal governments, and the private environmental consulting firms which support those governmental agencies.

Southerland worked for EPA for more than 30 years and earned a taxpayer-funded paycheck nearly six times that of the average American, \$249,000, in 2016.

Despite her healthy compensation, Southerland publicly complained about her retirement by criticizing proposed cuts to EPA under the president's proposed budget. Southerland was apparently not paid to know that it's actually the Congress that has the so-called "power of the purse" when it comes to the federal budget. Forbes explains:

First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president's budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades.

In 2015, for example, President Obama's budget came to the floor for a vote. The Senate rejected it by a 98-1 vote.

Given the history of presidential budgets failing, Southerland's excuse for "resigning" does not pass the smell test. Rather, just like her EPA colleague Mike Cox, Southerland likely wanted to retire "with a bang," and that motivated her to publish a letter critical of Trump and Pruitt.

To: jazz shaw[jazzshaw@gmail.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 3/22/2018 3:30:52 PM
Subject: RE: EPA Int'l Travel

Of course. Oh wow, Mike Reed is a great American.

From: jazz shaw [mailto:jazzshaw@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2018 11:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: EPA Int'l Travel

You really did me a solid on that one. Mike Reed from the RNC sent my column out in a mass mailing this morning. Really good hit for us. Thanks!

J

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 2:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Incredible - can't wait

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 21, 2018, at 2:34 PM, jazz shaw <jazzshaw@gmail.com> wrote:

Want a good laugh? While writing this up I noticed that the Washington Post quoted somebody yesterday bitching about Pruitt stopping at the Vatican during the G7 trip. When Gina McCarthy went to Italy in 2015, guess where she went? ;-)
<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/231297-epa-chief-talks-climate-with-pope-francis>

Thanks for the tip. This is going to be a great article. Later I'll dig for some other sightseeing she did. We might make this a weekly series for a while.

J

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 1:24 PM, jazz shaw <jazzshaw@gmail.com> wrote:

Okay. When you said "do not post" that sort of threw me off.

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 1:22 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

You can use the statement, please do. Just sharing the spreadsheets (see attachment) as a form of verification.

From: jazz shaw [mailto:jazzshaw@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 1:22 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: EPA Int'l Travel

So don't use the statement from you?

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 1:19 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Please do not post – you can report on it – attached is the spreadsheet for verification about McCarthy and Jackson.

From: jazz shaw [mailto:jazzshaw@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 1:12 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: EPA Int'l Travel

Niiiiiiiiice

On Wed, Mar 21, 2018 at 12:18 PM, Wilcox, Jahan
<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Jazz –

The Associated Press and a few other liberal organizations have been obsessed with creating a controversy surrounding the cost to protect EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt during his G-7 meetings in Italy. During the Obama Administration when EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy traveled to Italy, these news outlets never bothered to submit a public information request (FOIA) or report on the costs of her travel.

In fact, during her tenure at the EPA, McCarthy incurred numerous security related expenses for her trips to: Paris, Dubai, Tokyo, Costa Rica, Rio De Janeiro, Austria, Peru, Ghana and Rome.

Below is a statement that you are welcome to use along with the costs for the international trips that McCarthy and Jackson too.

“The double-standard couldn’t be more clear: under Barack Obama’s EPA the media chose not to report on expenditures to protect the EPA Administrator for international travel or the costs of their trips, but under the Trump Administration the costs to protect our government officials is somehow scandalous.” EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND ...

In 2017, Scott Pruitt and his security detail spent \$84,000 to travel to the G7 Summit in Italy. ([Washington Examiner](#), 03/20/18)

In 2017, Scott Pruitt and his staff spent \$40,000 to travel to Morocco. ([The Associated Press](#), 12/15/17)

In 2016, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$68,382 to travel to Ghana. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2016, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$45,139 to travel to Peru. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2016, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$74,737 to travel to Tokyo. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$41,320 to travel to Paris. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$90,367 to travel to Dubai. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$67,702 to travel to Tokyo. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2015, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$56,192 to travel to Italy. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2014, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$62,246 to travel to Vancouver. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2014, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$68,267 to travel to Vietnam. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2013, Gina McCarthy and her security detail spent \$55,384 to travel to China. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2012, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$64,963 to travel to Israel. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2011, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$59,950 to travel to Rio De Janeiro. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2011, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$51,435 to travel to Montreal. (EPA Office of the

Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

In 2011, Lisa Jackson and her security detail spent \$155,763 to travel to China. (EPA Office of the Administrator, Accessed 03/20/18)

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Strategic Communications Advisor
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To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 9:10:14 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Include the Oklahoman editorial

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:39 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

I've replaced the Hill story with the updated version. Otherwise good to send?

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:34 PM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Here is the updated Flint one: <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:13 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

Forgot the attachment.

From: Hewitt, James

Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017 4:00 PM

To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>; Graham, Amy <[graham.amy@epa.gov](mailto: graham.amy@epa.gov)>; Ferguson, Lincoln <[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov](mailto: ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov)>; Konkus, John <[konkus.john@epa.gov](mailto: konkus.john@epa.gov)>; Wilcox, Jahan <[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov](mailto: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov)>; Abboud, Michael <[abboud.michael@epa.gov](mailto: abboud.michael@epa.gov)>

Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

EPA Evening News Highlights 08.01.17

PJ Media: EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response... But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the *Tulsa World's* editorial board.

Washington Free Beacon: Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy. Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

Washington Examiner: EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that

carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well. In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

NTK Network: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network. The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The Hill: EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich. The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city's drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

E&E News: Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

Bloomberg: Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law. The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in

Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

Bloomberg: Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family. Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

PJ Media

<https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/08/01/epa-director-pruitts-hometown-paper-shoots-down-his-environmentalist-critics/>

EPA Director Pruitt's Hometown Paper Shoots Down His Environmentalist Critics

By Tyler O'Neil, 8/1/17

Last week, an environmentalist watchdog organization revealed a truly stunning development involving Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt: He visits his family on the weekends! While the green group attacked Pruitt's use of taxpayer money, his hometown paper delivered a powerful response.

"The Trump administration is seeking to cut EPA's budget by 31%, putting Americans' health and safety at risk," declared Austin Evers, executive director at American Oversight and a former lawyer for President Barack Obama's State department. "At the same time, Pruitt is spending scarce taxpayer dollars to fuel his personal ambition for higher office."

Expense reports from March, April, and May showed Pruitt traveling home at least 10 times, leaving Washington on Fridays and returning on Mondays. These trips cost the government

\$15,000. A Pruitt spokeswoman said the group inaccurately calculated the EPA director's travel days on Friday and Monday as days missed from work.

Pruitt himself denounced such green groups as "an alt-EPA."

But his own hometown paper powerfully shot down the criticisms. "A fishing expedition request for Pruitt's EPA expense accounts by an environmentalist advocacy group pretty much discovered" that Pruitt was returning home to his family (SHOCKER!) and "that he was spending some public money along the way and met with people that the advocates didn't approve of," wrote the Tulsa World's editorial board.

During his trips home, Pruitt stopped at the Brainerd Chemical Company in Tulsa and gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in Colorado.

"As outrages go, it's not worth much," the editorial board declared. "The Washington press corps and the environmental lobby might prefer that the EPA boss be held captive on the East Coast and that he hear nothing but the opinions of 'green' lobbyists, but the people out in fly-over country like it when we're being heard, too."

BURN!

"We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans," the World's editorial writers added. "If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists."

The World article ended on a powerful note. "It's apparent to us, and we suspect to Pruitt, that environmental extremists are determined to find anything they can use against him, including this not-so-damning evidence that he hasn't abandoned his family."

Furthermore, while Pruitt's predecessor Gina McCarthy might not have traveled back to the heartland (her family was in Boston, after all) on weekends, it is a common practice among members of Congress. Representatives travel home on weekends, not just to visit family, but to interact with the people they represent.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/scientific-integrity-committee-clears-pruitt-against-sierra-clubs-climate-denier-charge/>

Scientific Integrity Committee Clears Pruitt Against Sierra Club's 'Climate Denier' Charge

By Elizabeth Harrington, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club has failed in its attempt to label Scott Pruitt a violator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy.

Pruitt is off the hook for expressing an opinion about global warming, as a scientific review panel ruled that it is within EPA policy to call for rigorous debate on the issue, according to a letter obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

"The freedom to express one's opinion about science is fundamental to EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy even (and especially) when that point of view might be controversial," wrote Dr. Thomas Sinks, the director of the EPA's Office of the Science Advisor.

The Sierra Club filed a complaint to the inspector general against Pruitt in March, alleging Pruitt violated the Scientific Integrity Policy by saying during an interview that there is disagreement among scientists about whether CO₂ is the primary driver of global warming.

The inspector general referred the allegation to Dr. Francesca Grifo, the EPA's Scientific

Integrity Official, who then passed along the Sierra Club's complaint to the EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

The committee cleared Pruitt of the charge, and, in fact, defended the EPA administrator for expressing his opinion and encouraging "vigorous debate."

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributions to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter," the Scientific Integrity Review Panel said. "This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings."

The EPA panel went further in refuting the Sierra Club's interpretation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. The liberal environmentalist group had branded Pruitt a "climate denier" in its complaint.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the EPA panel said. "Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy—in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry—specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

The Sierra Club did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group's complaint was spurred by an interview Pruitt gave to CNBC, where he was asked, "Do you believe that it's been proven that carbon dioxide is the primary control knob for climate?"

Pruitt responded: "No. I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact. So no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see. But we don't know that yet... We need to continue the debate and continue the review and the analysis."

The letter was signed by Dr. Sinks, and sent to Elena Saxonhouse, a senior attorney for the Sierra Club, and Joanne Spalding, the group's chief climate counsel.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-scientific-integrity-office-clears-scott-pruitts-global-warming-comments-tells-sierra-club-to-pound-sand/article/2630301>

EPA scientific integrity office clears Scott Pruitt's global warming comments, tells Sierra Club to pound sand

By Philip Wegmann, 8/1/17

The Sierra Club tried censoring Scott Pruitt after the EPA administrator said in March that carbon dioxide is not creating climate change. It didn't go well.

In a written response to the Sierra Club, first obtained by the Washington Examiner, Thomas H. Sinks, director of the Office of the Science Advisor, defended Pruitt's "freedom to express one's opinion about science." In short, the EPA told the green group to stop trying to silence their director.

The scuffle over scientific integrity stems from a March 9th CNBC interview. Asked about carbon dioxide's effect on global warming, Pruitt responded, "No, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

And that was enough for the Sierra Club to try to blow the whistle on Pruitt with the EPA Inspector General.

"Pruitt clearly violated the Environmental Protection Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy by publicly denying that carbon pollution is driving the climate crisis," Senior Sierra Club Attorney Elena Saxonhouse wrote in the complaint. "If the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is to have any

meaning, then this type of clear violation must be strictly enforced and resolved."

But it turns out that the EPA is actually honor-bound to promote inquiry over ideology. The letter cites the agency's Scientific Integrity Policy which states that when an employee "disagrees with the scientific data," they are "encouraged to express that opinion."

Even the Scientific Integrity Panel wasn't buying the Sierra Club's complaint. And that panel, charged with monitoring scientific standards, has been no friend to Pruitt. For instance, as the Washington Examiner first reported in May, the head of that panel actually invited far-left green groups to advise the EPA on scientific integrity.

But when charged with investigating Pruitt's conduct, the panel ruled that his comment "is fully within the protections" of the EPA.

"Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy," the panel determined. "Indeed the Scientific Integrity Policy — in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry — specifically encourages employees to express their opinions should the employees disagree with the scientific data, scientific expressions, or scientific conclusions."

The bottom line in what this bureaucratic back and forth means? First, something similar to scientific inquiry still exists at the EPA. Second, Pruitt understands EPA standards and policies better than the environmental interest groups that used to run the show.

NTK Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

NTK Staff, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that it has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344789-epa-to-forgive-207-million-in-flint-mich-debts>

EPA to forgive \$21M in Flint debts

By Devin Henry, 8/1/17

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday concurred with a Michigan plan to forgive \$20.7 million in federal drinking water fund debts owed by Flint, Mich.

The step comes as the EPA and the federal government make amends for the city’s drinking water crisis. The government approved \$100 million in emergency funding for the city in March, and a government spending bill signed by President Trump in May directed the EPA to grant requests to forgive Flint's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) debts.

Flint's residents had been exposed to high levels of lead in the town's drinking water stemming from a 2014 decision to switch the source of the drinking water to the Flint River.

“Forgiving Flint’s past debt will better protect public health and reduce the costs associated with maintaining the city’s water system over time,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. “Forgiving the city’s debt will ensure that Flint will not need to resume payments on the loan, allowing progress toward updating Flint’s water system to continue.”

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said the loan forgiveness “will allow for state funding to be

spent on high priority infrastructure needs that maintain recent water quality improvements and address public health concerns.”

Flint had incurred the debt through four DWSRF loans issued between 1999 and 2003. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality formally requested loan forgiveness for the city in May, the Flint Journal reported then.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is an EPA program to provide federal funding to support upgrades to state and local drinking water systems.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/08/01/stories/1060058186>

Industry to EPA: We want rule 'fixed, not just gone'

By: Zack Colman, 8/1/17

Industry has delivered a clear message to the Trump administration during a series of recent closed-door meetings: Don't completely gut the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

To be sure, leading industry associations are pushing White House and U.S. EPA officials to drastically roll back the landmark climate change rule. They're advocating a new approach that still limits power plants' emissions but is narrower than the one envisioned by President Obama's team.

The heavy-hitting U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers advocated an "inside-the-fence" approach to power plant regulations during a July meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and EPA staff, they told E&E News. Critics of the Obama rule have argued that it overstepped by allowing emissions reductions "outside the fence line" of coal-fired power plants.

"We were trying to also lay the foundation for what we think would be an acceptable replacement rule because we want to see this rule fixed, not just gone forever," Ross Eisenberg, vice president of energy and natural resources policy with NAM, said in an interview.

Matt Letourneau, spokesman for the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said in an email: "It's safe to say we" pushed for inside-the-fence-line.

In rescinding the rule, EPA chief Scott Pruitt plans to argue that the Obama administration went too far in setting carbon reduction goals by looking at what the broader power system could achieve instead of focusing solely on improvements at coal plants, an administration official told E&E News in June (Climatewire, June 12).

The recently publicized meetings with industry hint of a nearing Trump administration decision on how and whether to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, though devising a formal rule could take several months. While OMB and EPA meet with a variety of interest and business groups affected by pending regulations, the Chamber and NAM carry considerable weight in the business community that President Trump has courted.

The Trump administration is facing pressure from conservatives to trash EPA's endangerment finding, which gives the agency the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. If the Trump administration adopts an inside-the-fence approach, it would mean those angling to challenge the endangerment finding have lost a key battle.

The meetings came after recent reports that EPA was planning to pursue a legal strategy known as the "112 exclusion," which argued the agency couldn't regulate power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — as the Clean Power Plan proposed — because they were already hit with limits for mercury and air toxins under Section 112.

Those pushing for a full Clean Power Plan repeal have acknowledged that a twin effort to scrub the endangerment finding may be necessary to ward off lawsuits that EPA wasn't doing enough to address emissions. A move to develop any carbon rules for power plants, however, would amount to an implicit admission that greenhouse gas emissions deserve curbing.

"If they had already decided that's what they wanted to do, then there would be no reason to develop this inside-the-fence-line approach," Jeff Holmstead, a partner at Bracewell LLP and former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush, said in an interview.

The White House referred E&E News to EPA, which did not return a request for comment.

'Skepticism' about axing endangerment finding

EPA officials under Obama argued the electricity system required regulation as an interconnected entity, thereby achieving emissions reductions beyond power plants' physical parameters. Opponents, though, said that view was too expansive — some have argued regulations must apply to power plants themselves, while others maintain EPA lacks authority to regulate power plant carbon emissions because it already caps mercury emissions.

Utilities have pushed for the inside-the-fence-line approach rather than a full dismantling of the Clean Power Plan because they say it provides more certainty. They argue that something like requiring on-site efficiency improvements could prevent future presidents from pursuing ever-more aggressive rules. Detractors in the environmental community note, however, that emissions reductions under this scenario would be small.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group representing investor-owned utilities, declined to say what it advocated for in its July 26 meeting — for which White House energy adviser Mike Catanzaro was present — though it has in the past advocated for an inside-the-fence tactic.

An industry source who wasn't present for that meeting noted Catanzaro had expressed "skepticism" about the administration's ability to overturn the endangerment finding. The source said Catanzaro was concerned about getting into endless litigation, as the administration would need to compile anthologies of climate change science that refuted greenhouse gas emissions' effects on a warming planet — a heady if not impossible task.

That said, the industry source wasn't ready to take bets on where the administration would end up on the Clean Power Plan.

"There's wide agreement among the utility industry that inside-the-fence-line would make more sense," the source said. "But there's certainly other people pushing for a different approach, including people who have sway with this White House. I'd be very cautious saying anything definitive."

An inside-the-fence-line plan is "ultimately not enough in the long term" when it comes to restricting regulation on energy, said Tom Pyle, president of the conservative Institute for Energy Research. Pyle said in an interview that he's "not surprised" the business community is lobbying for that approach, though.

"Obviously wherever as aggressively EPA could go is where I'd be comfortable with," said Pyle, who also ran Trump's Energy Department transition team, stating his desire to whack the endangerment finding.

Some haven't given up hope on the Section 112 exclusion and an ultimate challenging of the endangerment finding. Myron Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment, said in an email that the White House could ask for input on both the inside-the-fence-line approach and Section 112 exclusion in the public comment portion of the rulemaking process after rescinding the Clean Power Plan.

To environmental groups, a move to regulate inside the fence line would signal that the administration is taking policy cues from industry rather than the far right. Utilities and manufacturers, after all, were chief advocates of such a plan when the Obama administration rolled out its regulation, which sought a 32 percent reduction of power plant emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. That largely relied on shifts from coal-fired power to natural gas and renewable energy.

"An inside-the-fence-line approach with an argument in the alternative that industry lacks authority to regulate carbon emissions under Section 111 follows the industry talking points to a T," John Walke, senior attorney and clean air director with the Natural Resources Defense

Council, said in an interview.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/refiners-argue-epa-can-cut-biofuel-quota-despite-defeat-in-court>

Refiners Argue EPA Can Cut Biofuel Quota Despite Defeat in Court

By Jennifer A Dlouhy and Ari Natter, 8/1/17

Refiners told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to cut biofuel quotas for 2018, arguing that a federal court decision against the agency shouldn't prevent it from setting targets below levels enshrined in law.

The administration of President Donald Trump still has the authority to waive congressional biofuel levels to avert economic or environmental harm, refiner Valero Energy Corp. and oil industry trade groups said at an EPA hearing on the issue Tuesday in Washington. Economic harm could result, industry groups said, if refiners are forced to blend more than 10 percent ethanol into the fuel supply, a level the oil industry dubs the blend wall.

"The ethanol blend wall is a real constraint on today's fuel supply system that makes the statutory volumes unattainable and limits the use of ethanol," said Frank Macchiarola, a group director at the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp.

Nothing in a ruling by a federal court in Washington last week "clips the wings of the EPA" to set lower biofuel quotas that avoid economic harm, said Scott Segal, a Bracewell LLP lobbyist representing Valero. "Severe harm can be established on a number of fronts."

Biofuel producers such as Poet LLC, however, argued that ruling largely handcuffs the EPA, forcing the government to require the use of 15 billion gallons of ethanol and more next generation biofuel next year and for years to come.

The dueling opinions illustrate the challenge facing Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as they try to fulfill political promises to help corn farmers in the Midwest, appease oil companies eager to protect market share and live within the contours of a biofuel mandate created last decade when the U.S. was hooked on imports of Mideast crude.

In a unanimous ruling Friday, a three-judge panel sided with ethanol producers in saying the EPA was wrong to justify setting lower quotas for 2016 based on constraints in demand, such as limited infrastructure to deliver the product to consumers or the availability of higher blended fuel mixes. For years, the oil industry has argued that the congressional target in the Renewable Fuel Standard push refiners past a 10 percent blend wall for ethanol in gasoline -- the amount that can be easily blended because it is acceptable in all cars and trucks. Ethanol producers argued that was the entire point of the law.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. is E10, or 10 percent ethanol. Higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, are not available at all filling stations and not all vehicles can use them, oil industry leaders said Tuesday.

Trump's EPA has proposed requiring the use of 15 billion gallons of conventional renewable fuels in 2018 -- the maximum allowed for that category in law -- while lowering proposed quotas for advanced alternatives that have been slow to commercialize, including cellulosic ethanol made from corn stalks and other non-edible materials. The agency is set to finalize the 2018 targets before the end of this year.

The Side of Pessimism

Biofuel groups complained that the reductions for advanced biofuel use will curtail growth in the market.

"The agency has erred on the side of pessimism with regard to the potential for significant growth in cellulosic ethanol," said Bob Dinneen, head of the Renewable Fuels Association. The "spirit and intent" of the law was to "maximize the nation's use of these fuels, to drive marketplace innovation and investment in these new technologies, and to make the U.S. more

energy diverse."

Jan Koninckx, DuPont Co.'s global business director for advanced biofuels, said Trump's EPA used a flawed methodology to estimate potential cellulosic ethanol production and propose requiring 238 million gallons of it for 2018. That's down from 311 million gallons required this year.

"EPA must revisit the process used in the current proposal for cellulosic ethanol and follow its own guidance and process used for the 2016 and 2017 cellulosic" quotas, Koninckx said.

Higher advanced biofuel targets would help drive innovation and spur more production, said Pete Ricketts, the governor of Nebraska.

Still, overall, EPA's "proposal is consistent with the president's statements of support for the corn ethanol industry," Ricketts said.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-01/trump-worked-with-fox-news-in-dnc-staffer-story-suit-claims>

Trump Worked With Fox News on DNC Staffer Story, Suit Claims

By Erik Larson, Bob Van Voris, and Andrew M Harris, 8/1/17

President Donald Trump collaborated with Fox News to concoct a story claiming a Democratic National Committee staffer was killed in retaliation for leaking Hillary Clinton's emails to Wikileaks, according to a lawsuit by a private investigator for the slain man's family.

Trump, who allegedly reviewed the Fox story before it was published on May 16, intended for

the article to divert attention from the widening probe into ties between his campaign and Russia, according to the suit filed Tuesday by Rod Wheeler, the investigator, a former Washington police detective and occasional Fox News contributor.

He claims Fox attributed fabricated quotes attributed to him in the story to back up the network's false thesis. Wheeler said the fake quotes amount to defamation. Fox later retracted the story.

The alleged motive behind the report, overseen by Fox investigative journalist Malia Zimmerman, was "to shift the blame from Russia and help put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election," Wheeler said in the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

"The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman," Fox News President Jay Wallace said in a statement. He called the allegations "completely erroneous."

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Wheeler's allegations.

Unsolved Crime

Seth Rich was shot to death on July 10, 2016, as he walked home from a Washington bar. Police believe Rich was the victim of a botched robbery attempt, but the crime remains unsolved.

After Clinton claimed that Russian hackers had been the source of the DNC leak, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange deflected the claim in part by pointing out that Rich, a low level staffer, had been murdered weeks earlier, hinting at a DNC conspiracy.

Wheeler's suit names Zimmerman and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky, a friend to former Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon. Butowsky allegedly

approached Wheeler in February and offered to finance an investigation into Rich's murder for Zimmerman's story, according to the lawsuit.

According to the complaint, it was all just a setup.

"Butowsky and Zimmerman were not simply Good Samaritans attempting to solve a murder," Wheeler said in the suit. They "hoped that, if they could confirm that Seth Rich leaked the DNC emails to WikiLeaks, that would debunk reports the Russians were responsible for the DNC hacks."

The allegedly faked quotes used in the story, attributed to Wheeler, include, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks." Wheeler was also falsely quoted saying the Democratic National Committee or Clinton's team were blocking the murder investigation.

‘Behind the Scenes’

Butowsky allegedly kept Spicer and Bannon apprised of the work on the Rich murder story, as well as the Justice Department's director of public affairs, Sarah Flores. She denied the allegation. "I have not communicated with Mr. Butowsky at any point this year," Flores said in an email.

Butowsky told Wheeler that the bogus quotes were included in the story because "that is the way the President wanted the article," according to the suit. Butowsky couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

The first paragraph of Wheeler's complaint includes a screen shot of a May 14 text message to Wheeler by Butowsky that reads: "Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It's now all up to you. but don't feel the pressure."

Fox retracted the story on May 23, but not before it inflamed Clinton opponents and fueled conspiracy theories.

The court fight cuts to the heart of one of Trump's regular claims about the media -- that news outlets other than Fox are essentially fake news, especially stories linking his campaign to Russia.

"Fox News was working with the Trump administration to disseminate fake news in order to distract the public from Russia's alleged attempts to influence our Country's presidential election," Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Wheeler, said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

Wheeler, who is black, also claims Fox discriminated against him based on his race by giving him less air time than white colleagues who are more frequently hired into full-time positions. Wigdor represents several current and former Fox staffers who have made similar allegations.

"Fox News vehemently denies the race discrimination claims in the lawsuit -- the dispute between Zimmerman and Rod Wheeler has nothing to do with race," Wallace said in the statement.

James Hewitt

Environmental Protection Agency

Special Advisor for Public Affairs

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To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 8/1/2017 3:57:26 PM
Subject: NTK: Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

Internal Review Finds That Pruitt Didn't Violate EPA Policy

The EPA's Office of Inspector General ruling deals a blow to the liberal Sierra Club.
NTK Network
August 1, 2017

<http://ntknetwork.com/internal-review-finds-that-pruitt-didnt-violate-the-epa-policy/>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Scientific Integrity Review Panel found that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt didn't violate the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview in March, according to a statement exclusively obtained by the NTK Network.

The Sierra Club filed a formal complaint with the EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in March, which alleged that Pruitt had violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box."

The interview that the Sierra Club is referring to happened in March, and during the interview Pruitt said that he did not agree with the host's assessment that is has been proven that carbon is the primary contributor to global warming.

In the Sierra Club's complaint, they alleged that Pruitt's comments violated the EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy.

A Scientific Integrity Review Panel was convened to review Pruitt's comments, which is "consistent with established Coordination Procedures between the Scientific Integrity Official and the Office of Inspector General."

The panel concluded that Pruitt's statement did not violate the Scientific Integrity Policy, and said that "an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy."

The Scientific Integrity Review Panel's full ruling:

"In his response, the Administrator expressed his opinion regarding contributors to global warming and called for more debate, review, and analysis as a precursor to any future EPA policy decision on the matter. This expression of opinion, which was not made in a decisional context, is fully within the protections of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy and does not violate that Policy. We also note that, in his remarks, the Administrator did not suppress or alter Agency scientific findings.

Expressing an opinion about science is not a violation of the EPA Scientific Integrity Policy. Indeed, the Scientific Integrity Policy – in the spirit of promoting vigorous debate and inquiry – specifically encourages employees to express their opinion should the employee disagree with scientific data, scientific interpretations, or scientific conclusions."

To: tips@hotair.com[tips@hotair.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 8/15/2017 8:27:10 PM
Subject: RE: NTK: Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Ed since you're a Minnesotan like myself (it's almost time for the fair) here is a statement and research about Ellison.

ON-THE-RECORD STATEMENT ... "Last month, Governor Dayton praised EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to eliminate federal bureaucracy to state agencies and the Star Tribune applauded Pruitt's efforts to protect the Great Lakes. Administrator Pruitt is committed to protecting Minnesota's environment and provide Americans with regulatory certainty." EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND ...

DFL Governor Mark Dayton praises Pruitt for working to eliminate some of the federal government's red tape dealt to state agencies. "Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. 'We don't believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,' Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour. Dayton said state agencies want to establish a "collaborative and cooperative" relationship with the EPA." ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

EPA's Pruitt backs federal funding for Great Lakes. "Scott Pruitt, the nation's top environmental officer, said Wednesday he endorses continued federal funding for a landmark cleanup of the Great Lakes ... 'I understand the investment that's been made historically,' said Pruitt, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), during an interview with the Star Tribune. It's a continuing need, and we have to see that it's adequately funded.'" ([Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), 07/19/17)

EPA's Pruitt signals welcome support for Great Lakes restoration project. "Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Scott Pruitt's visit to Minnesota last week yielded an unexpected boon for those who care about clean water. In an interview with a Star Tribune reporter, Pruitt affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior." (Editorial, [The Star Tribune](#), 07/21/17)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 4:18 PM

To: 'tips@hotair.com' <tips@hotair.com>

Subject: NTK: Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Here Is Why Keith Ellison's Community Forum To Save The EPA Is Pointless

Scott Pruitt has received praise from Minnesota's Democratic Governor and The Star Tribune for his work.

Need To Know Network

August 15, 2017

<http://ntknetwork.com/here-is-why-keith-ellisons-community-forum-to-save-the-epa-is-pointless/>

Democratic National Committee vice chair Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) is holding a community forum to save the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Minnesota on Tuesday. It's a curious move, given that the EPA has received bipartisan praise for its work in Minnesota under the leadership of Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Come and join Congressman Ellison along with environmental advocates, scientists, and musicians to learn about Trump's plan for the EPA and how we're fighting back in Congress," is how Ellison's Tuesday night forum is billed.

Ellison's attacks on the EPA, and specifically its work in Minnesota, are strange given that Pruitt has received praise in the state of Minnesota for his support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Additionally, Minnesota's Democratic Governor Mark Dayton has praised Pruitt for working to eliminate the federal government's red tape.

"Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies," Minnesota Public Radio wrote in July.

During a visit to Minnesota in July, Pruitt "affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative."

According to The Star Tribune, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative “provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior.”

The Star Tribune’s editorial board, which is a traditionally liberal-leaning paper, praised Pruitt for his support for the Great Lakes restoration project.

“Last month, Governor Dayton praised EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to eliminate federal bureaucracy to state agencies, and The Star Tribune applauded Pruitt’s efforts to protect the Great Lakes. Administrator Pruitt is committed to protecting Minnesota’s environment and provide Americans with regulatory certainty,” an EPA spokesman said in a statement.

###

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To: Kevin Bogardus[kbogardus@eenews.net]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 3/9/2018 4:26:42 PM
Subject: Re: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

Correct, Strategies 360

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 9, 2018, at 10:16 AM, Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net> wrote:

Many thanks, Jahan. This is a big help. I really appreciate it.

Just so we are clear, I'm going to say in my story that Go BIG Media, Inc. was contracted by EPA to help produce EPA's "EPA Year in Review 2017-2018" report (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/year_in_review_3.5.18.pdf). I will also note that the document was ultimately made in-house, per your statement.

Also, I believe you are referring to Strategies 360 and the What's Upstream campaign, which I have covered in the past (<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060053483>). Please tell me if you are referring to a different firm.

And I have one follow-up questions, which is:

- Can you name the other vendor – the \$29,140 one – who bid for this contract?

Please get back to me before my deadline of 12:30 pm EST today. Thanks again for your help.

-Kevin

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2018 10:02 AM
To: Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: EPA and Go BIG Media, Inc.

“We had two options: one vendor was \$29,140 and the other was \$6,500, but ultimately this document was made in-house. This pales in comparison to the previous administration that paid \$570,000 to a Democratic campaign manager’s PR firm to run EPA’s What’s Upstream campaign.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On Mar 9, 2018, at 9:35 AM, Kevin Bogardus <kbogardus@eenews.net> wrote:

Hey guys,

It’s Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

Myself and a colleague are working on a piece about Go BIG Media, Inc. and EPA. Go BIG Media, a Republican media firm, signed a contract with EPA last month to help produce an “end of year report” (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>). I had some questions for you about this, which are:

■• Did Go BIG Media, Inc. work on EPA’s “EPA Year in Review 2017-2018” report (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/year_in_review_3.5.18.pdf)? If so, what exactly did Go BIG Media do on the report? Editing? Graphics? Design? Please be specific as possible.

■• Did EPA pay Go BIG Media for this work on the report? If so, how much? According to [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) data, \$0 of the contract has been obligated but Elliot Fuchs, Go BIG Media's controller, told me that EPA did pay the firm \$6,500 for its work for the agency. I wanted to check that with you to make sure it was accurate.

■• How did Go BIG Media end up doing this work for EPA? Who contacted who first?

■• Is Go BIG Media's work on this report required under the contract Go BIG Media signed with EPA last month for "design, graphics, production and edits of the EPA end of year report" (<https://www.usaspending.gov/#/award/61802028>)?

■• The [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) data shows there were two offers received for this contract. Who else bid for this contract?

■• Go BIG Media is a Republican media firm. The last time a Republican firm, Definers Corp., had a contract with EPA, Definers ended up losing its contract with EPA. Are you worried about a similar backlash to this contract?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

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To: Leopold, Matt[Leopold.Matt@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 4/25/2018 9:32:52 PM
Subject: FW: Request for comment on hearings

From: Friedman, Lisa [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 7:32 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Request for comment on hearings

Hi Liz & Jahan,

I'm running a story today that advances the congressional hearings at which Mr. Pruitt will testify Thursday.

The story will include and make reference to a document that I have, entitled "Hot Topics." The story will characterize this document as outlining Mr. Pruitt's potential responses to likely questions during the hearings.

Can you tell me who drafted this document? I'd also like to get a comment on whether it accurately describes answers that Mr. Pruitt has been prepped by staff to give.

I won't attach the actual document but for purposes of verifying its validity with you, this with you it begins:

HOT TOPICS

Condo

Kevin Minoli, EPA's principal deputy general counsel, in a March 30 memo determined that the rate for 30 consecutive days would have equated to a monthly rent of \$1,500. Minoli described that as "reasonable market value." He also found it did not constitute a "prohibited gift." I would be happy to provide that memo to your staff.

These, according to the document, are some of the other topics he is prepared to address — several of which I will make reference to in the story:

SCIF; Sweeping the office; Biometric Locks; Bullet proof vehicles and tires; Office Decoration; Netjets; G7 Trip; Staffing (Raises; Samantha Dravis; Alleged Reassignment of Staff); Sue and Settle; Super Fund Task Force; Travel; First Class Travel; Morocco; Non-Commercial Flights; Homebuilders Association Hotel; Advisory Panels (membership, grants); Definers Contract; Chlorpyrifos; Climate change strategic plan; Enforcement; Funding; DOJ Funding; emails; Environmental Justice; War on Lead; IRIS; grants process; meetings with industry; Narragansett Bay; Regulatory Task Force; Reorganizations; and VERA/ViSP.

Finally, the story will point out that, according to the preparations shown in this document, Mr. Pruitt may say that other people were responsible for the bulk of the recent spending and ethics issues like frequent first class travel, the SCIF and pay raises.

I will need a comment on this by 11 a.m, and of course if you have any other comment on Mr. Pruitt's plans for testifying before Congress tomorrow I will certainly include. I'll be out of pocket for the next hour but you can also call me on my cell after 8:30 a.m. if you'd like to speak directly.

Thanks so much,

Lisa

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

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